

Whitehorse, Yukon**Thursday, November 15, 2007 -- 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES**In remembrance of Angel Carlick**

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my condolences to the family and friends of Angel Carlick. I am sure all members of this Assembly join me in extending our heartfelt condolences. We mourn with those who have lost children, whose lives were cut terribly short. As a parent and a grandmother, I grieve with those who have lost a child. My own children are so very dear to me.

Angel was born on June 11, 1988, in Good Hope Lake, British Columbia, and was a member of the Dease Lake First Nation. Angel had worked at the Youth of Today Society's Blue Feather Youth Centre since March 2005 and was an amazing role model to many youth.

She always had a smile on her face and constantly showed great interest and excitement in her work. Angel gave much to her community in ways that many of us are unaware of. She contributed many hours to painting murals in the community, including the mural behind The Hougén Centre, the mural in the gymnasium at Grey Mountain School and, her favourite, the mural on the fence along the Blue Feather Youth Centre. This was her favourite because the mural included a painting of Angel herself. It was also very special to her because her mom, brother and grandmother would often stop to admire her work.

Angel spent many hours cooking and serving meals at the youth centre. She became a big sister to many and even a mom to some.

Angel encouraged others to be respectful to one another and earned the respect of others for herself. I would like to share with you a few of the many tributes to Angel from her family and friends and the youth at the Blue Feather Youth Centre. Many of them are here with us today.

"Angel has inspired us to believe in ourselves and to achieve our goals. You have opened many hearts. We will all miss you, Angel. Angel, you will always be in my heart and with me wherever I go. May your journey beyond be full of light. God, our Creator, loves Angel" -- the youth of today and tomorrow, Angel's mother Wendy, brother Alex, grandma Angel, and all her aunts, uncles and cousins. "Keep on shining, beautiful Angel. With love and respect, love and peace, little Angel."

Gunilschish for those comments. In the face of grief I find comfort in her family and friends that they request that we not focus on grief, but rather that we celebrate the life of Angel and

remember her accomplishments of her very short life. May she be remembered for the positive role model she set for her peers. Angel Carlick was an advocate for disadvantaged youth. She did all this for her community and to make a better place for youth. Angel's strong spirit will forever be near her family, friends and our community. Gunilschish Angel.

Mr. Mitchell: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to offer our condolences to the family and friends of Angel Carlick. The disappearance and ultimate loss of this young woman's life at 19 years of age has affected the lives of many, many Yukoners.

Angel's life story is both about success and failure. Angel was the success; she was overcoming her battles and taking positive steps for her future. Angel had become a role model and leader to many of her peers. She led by example. She was always there to lend a hand, to listen and to comfort other youth at the Blue Feather Youth Centre.

She was a very personable young lady. She loved to draw, she loved to cook, and she was so looking forward to her graduation in the future.

Last spring when I attended the Porter Creek Secondary School graduation, I took particular notice when Angel's graduation photo appeared on the screen. I've known many Carlick family members over the years in Whitehorse and Atlin, and my wife has taught many Carlick children in school, so I wondered if Angel was a member of one of the families we knew and I thought it was too bad she was unable to attend her graduation ceremonies. That was just before she was reported missing and it has caused me to reflect a great deal since then.

Mr. Speaker, I said Angel's story was about success and failure. The failure, sad to say, is ours. The failure is ours as a society, as adults and as Yukoners, as human beings.

So many of our youth have fallen through the cracks. They are on the outside looking in. So many are homeless or at risk with no safety net. The failure is ours, as members of this Assembly. There are only 18 of us who have the privilege to sit in this Assembly on behalf of Yukoners. I know that every member here, regardless of their political beliefs, has a good heart. I know that every one of us ran for office because we believed we could do things here on behalf of our Yukon family. I know that many of us have spoken out about the need to provide a safe place for our youth when they find themselves at risk, and I know that the minister has been working on this and intends to bring forward a solution in the near future.

But I have to accept that we failed Angel. We all meant to do our best, but we have not moved quickly enough. I accept that I have failed, because while I have attended many public meetings and rallies over the past two years, while I've raised this issue in this House many times, and while I promised to help find a solution, I didn't do so in time for Angel. I pledge today to do better, because I don't want to give any more of these tributes. I don't want to feel the burden of any more deaths, and I don't want to face any more families in mourning for their children. I don't want to wear any more blue ribbons in remembrance.

We must do more to protect our youth. We must create a place they can call home, a safe haven from the streets and the dangers that await there.

Our youth don't need a handout; they need a hand up. They need to know that we as a society value them and believe they are all precious and all have a contribution to make -- to know that there is hope for the future. This would be a fitting legacy to the life of Angel Carlick.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the counsellors and volunteers who are working so hard to comfort and assist the family and young people who are going through these difficulties. And on behalf of all Yukoners, we send our sincere condolences to Angel's family, her friends and her co-workers as they go through the grieving process.

Thank you.

Mr. Edzerza: I rise on behalf of the NDP caucus to share in a tribute to Angel Carlick, a young woman who has touched all our lives. When she disappeared, Angel was a concern to many people. A large number of them participated in trying to locate her, and many prayers were made for her safety.

Now that she has been found, we all grieve with her family and friends. Our deepest sympathy goes out to them in this sad time.

It wasn't the way we wanted it, but it is a positive thing that she has been found. It helps to bring closure, to comfort the members of her family and her friends whom she has left behind.

Traditionally, First Nations believe that our spirit does not belong to us and the spirit goes back to the Creator after we leave this life, and it's a far better place than here. We reunite with loved ones who have gone before us. That is where Angel is now. She is safe with the Creator.

To have Angel's life end in such a tragedy is a very difficult thing, but it is good for us to recognize the many positive things in her life. After some challenges in her life, she finished high school. She was working, and she had plans to look after her brother. Her cheerful nature comforted many young people, which earned her respect.

Angel has left us lessons that we should listen to. She was putting together a life of achievement and compassion that serve as an example for all of us. Let us carry that thought through the next difficult days and longer.

Thank you.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors, please.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge the youth from the Blue Feather Youth Centre, run by the Youth of Today Society, and Angel's grandmother, Angel Carlick; her mother, Wendy Carlick; her uncle, Terry Carlick; and her aunts and uncles and her friends. Thank you for coming.

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the Motor Transport Board annual report for 2006-07.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling the Government of Yukon investment portfolio report as of today, November 15, 2007.

Speaker: Are there any further documents for tabling? Reports of committees. Are there any petitions? Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 107: Introduction and First Reading

Mr. Hardy: I move that a bill, entitled *Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Leader of the Third Party that a bill, entitled *Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 107 agreed to

Speaker: Are there further bills for introduction? Hearing none, are there notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to work with the Government of Canada, First Nations, Yukon College, members of the business community and non-governmental organizations to

(1) enhance and develop labour market initiatives targeting First Nations, older workers, youth, persons with disabilities and immigrants through measures such as apprenticeship programs, the youth employment program, the Yukon nominee program, the temporary foreign worker program and other programs;

(2) develop a national recruiting campaign; and

(3) assist in the development of retention incentives for employers.

NOTICES OF MOTION FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PAPERS

Mr. Mitchell: I give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of

(1) copies of any correspondence from the office of the Auditor General that confirms she has investigated the circumstances surrounding the Government of Yukon's decision to reinvest \$36.5 million in asset-backed commercial paper in July and August of 2007.

I give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of

(1) copies of bank guarantees, that the government says it has, relating to the investment of \$36.5 million of taxpayers' money in asset-backed commercial paper.

Mr. Fairclough: I give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of

(1) statistics relating to the use of tasers in the Yukon;
 (2) a copy of the policy that governs the use of tasers in the Yukon; and
 (3) any research into the use of tasers that has been completed by the Government of Yukon.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion? Statements by ministers.

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Government investments

Mr. Mitchell: The Minister of Finance and the Acting Minister of Finance have insisted that the investments totally \$36.5 million made by the Government of Yukon are secured by a guarantee from a bank. An official with the Department of Finance said yesterday that we have a guarantee but there's no piece of paper showing it. Not exactly confidence-inspiring, is it? Will the minister stop what appears to be an act of fantasy and admit to Yukoners that this government has no such guarantee from any bank?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'd just like to put forward a number of facts for the member opposite's information as I have certainly alluded to over the last number of days. Certainly the Government of Yukon has been making similar investments all the way back dating to 2001 when the previous Liberal government took office. If the member is so critical of the process today, what does that say about his view of financial investments performed under the previous Liberal administration?

Second, the government has not lost any money on its investments.

Third, Finance officials have and will continue to be in contact with the Government of Canada Auditor General's Office with respect to these transactions and other matters, as a routine course of business.

As I have articulated, these particular investments and the events surrounding them have been fully disclosed to the Auditor General of Canada, and we will continue to be in close contact with her.

Earlier today I tabled a list of the investments -- how the Government of Yukon invests these particular investments -- and we will continue to provide full transparency and full disclosure.

Mr. Mitchell: The marketplace for asset-backed commercial paper was significantly different in July and August of 2007 than it was in 2001 or 2002, or in 2003 for that matter. That's the point of what we're going at.

A Finance official was quoted in the November 14 edition of the *Whitehorse Star* saying, "It could be difficult to table the guarantee. The guarantee is between the trust company overseeing the investments and the banks."

Let me repeat, Mr. Speaker: "It could be difficult to table the guarantee." I fully concur. You cannot table a fantasy. There is no guarantee. This government's management of our money is but an act of folly.

Will the acting minister step into the world of reality and simply admit, "Sorry, but there is no guarantee and our money is in fact at the mercy of the marketplace."?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will not make any apologies for the net financial resources that we have housed within the Government of Yukon, thanks to the good due diligence of our department officials in the Department of Finance.

I have noticed that the members opposite find that this is a bit laughable as a notion. We take these matters very seriously, as do the department officials in the Department of Finance.

Again, let me point out some additional facts for the members opposite. The third party asset-backed commercial paper held by the Yukon government has been given the highest rating possible by the primary rating service provider in Canada. Unlike other commercial paper, these particular investments have been secured -- are secured -- by assets. Again, all the supporting assets backing the commercial paper held by the Yukon government are rated AAA -- the highest rating available.

Mr. Speaker, other governments, government agencies and government pension plans are regular buyers and are certainly holders of asset-backed commercial paper. We run a very cautious, well-diversified portfolio of investments -- investments that are low risk, investments that have a low rate of return. Investments -- I might add, Mr. Speaker -- that have earned this government the luxury of having \$18 million since 2004.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, today both Symphony Trust and Opus Trust were listed by Perimeter Markets Corp. -- a financial services company that is trying to create a market for trading ABCPs. As of 3:00 p.m. EST not a single bid had been received to purchase them. Some other trusts were receiving bids in the 50-percent range -- 50 cents on the dollar -- but the trusts this government are holding did not even get so much as that.

Mr. Speaker, a common term in financial circles when referring to taking a loss in the marketplace is that the investor will take a haircut. Well, Mr. Speaker, it appears that as of today, Yukon will not just get a haircut, Yukon is in danger of getting a shave and haircut. What does it take, Mr. Speaker, for this government to stand up and come clean with Yukoners? Will the acting minister admit that there is no guarantee and the conditions for investing -- as clearly laid out in the *Financial Administration Act* -- have been contravened?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The lack of seller interest in this regard indicates that investors are prepared to wait until the restructuring process has actually been completed -- by December 14. That is a good thing.

Unlike members opposite, we do not second-guess our officials in the Department of Finance and, in fact, those individuals have been making sound investments for years, as I have articulated to the Assembly over the last few days. Those decisions have garnered five consecutive years of annual accumulated surpluses within the Government of Yukon, one of only two jurisdictions in this country that have actually earned that right.

Also, for five consecutive years we have received a clean bill of financial health from the Auditor General of Canada -- unqualified audits as compared to the previous Liberal government that actually received qualified audits.

Thanks to the good work of our Finance officials, we have been able to invest in the Yukon in areas of critical importance, whether it be childcare, outreach services to those in need, Health and Social Services to the tune of almost \$200 million.

Perhaps members opposite would like to have a large-screen, plasma television hoisted at the foot of the Yukon Legislative Assembly so we can all view ROBTv and we can all make decisions --

Speaker: Thank you.

Question re: Government investments

Mr. Mitchell: I would like to return to the issue of our \$36.5 million investments. I've reviewed the assets of both Symphony Trust and Opus Trust. Both funds have a striking similarity. They are both comprised of multi-million-dollar leveraged corporate collateralized debt obligations, or CDOs. Leveraged loans work just fine as long as the assets backing them continue to do well. Leveraging magnifies the potential for increased profit -- the profits that the minister likes to quote. Leveraging also magnifies the potential to take a loss, as is the case here, Mr. Speaker.

In light of the fact that we have no guarantee, we must now rely totally on the asset value. Can the minister tell the House what we actually bought? What are those assets?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: For the members' opposite information, I will articulate very closely -- we certainly take the direction and the advice of the Auditor General of Canada in this particular regard. The Auditor General of Canada is fully aware of the government's investment policy, has been fully aware of each of these transactions that have been made over the course of the year, has been fully made aware of investments over the last five years, and in turn, the Government of Yukon has been able to receive five consecutive years of healthy financial surpluses within the bank of the Government of Yukon -- as well as unqualified audits for five consecutive years. The Auditor General of Canada has stated in her opinion the transactions of the government that have come to her notice have been, in all respects, in accordance with the government's powers under the *Yukon Act*, *Financial Administration Act*, regulations, legislative authorities and bylaws governing the organizations.

Mr. Mitchell: Let me summarize for the minister, because what we just heard was 90 seconds that can be summarized in three words: I don't know.

I am trying not to get too technical in my questions. I will try to stay away from too many financial terms, but I have reviewed the assets of both Symphony Trust and Opus Trust.

Both funds have a striking similarity. They're both comprised of multi-million dollar leverage CDOs -- collateralized debt obligations. We bought a bunch of debt. What are the assets backing that debt? Does the acting Finance minister know?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I am trying very hard to articulate for the members opposite regarding these particular investments. As I have mentioned on many occasions -- and I will continue, I'm very pleased to repeat for the members opposite -- that these particular investments held by the Yukon government have been given the highest rating possible by the primary rating service in the country.

These investments are secured by assets. Again, all of the supporting assets backing the commercial papers held by the government are certainly rated AAA, the highest rating possible.

As I have articulated also, other governments, other government agencies, government pension plans -- the Government of Ontario, for example, invested \$700 million in similar asset-backed papers as well, similar to these particular investments.

The Yukon government, through the Department of Finance and the very goodwill of the officials who have been there for many years, are doing a fine job on behalf of the Government of Yukon. And thanks to that job, we have been able to invest in areas of critical importance.

Mr. Mitchell: A prominent financial advisor from Outside of this territory told us this morning that leverage CDOs are simply high risk. He told us that he would never invest any more than 15 percent of a client's funds in a leverage CDO without the client's full understanding of the risks involved. We have almost 40 percent of our \$100-million surplus tied up in this type of investment, and it's clear that neither the Finance minister nor the acting Finance minister have an understanding of the risks involved.

This is not news to the financial community. Surely, in July, when these investments were made, there was ample concern in the marketplace over the volatility over these leveraged investments. The government thought they had a guarantee. They did not. They thought they were low risk. They were not.

As of minutes ago, there have been no takers for these trusts. No one wants to buy them. My question, Mr. Speaker: is the acting Finance minister now willing to accept responsibility, and will she admit that this is a case of financial incompetence?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, certainly if this is a matter of financial incompetence, it all started with the previous Liberal administration -- if that's where the member opposite really cares to go.

Mr. Speaker, these investments were first started during the previous Liberal administration in the year 2001 -- one year prior to us taking office. Mr. Speaker, again, with respect to the trading that began yesterday and with respect to these particular investments -- again, a lack of seller interest indicates that investors are prepared to certainly wait for the restructuring process to complete itself by December 14. That is what this government is looking forward to, as well.

I certainly take issue with the members opposite continuing to second-guess the good work of the officials in the Department of Finance. Mr. Speaker, we have the utmost faith and confidence in the Department of Finance and the good work that they have been able to achieve for the Yukon.

Question re: Government investments

Mr. Hardy: I have to admire the acting minister. She has become quite skilled at sidestepping questions and falling back on the tired old party line, and we have been hearing it for quite a few days now.

We have a Finance minister who claims he doesn't know or care how much he makes. We have an acting minister who doesn't seem to care how her officials invest taxpayers' dollars. Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil, Mr. Speaker. So where does the buck actually stop?

Let me try this: will the acting minister give her assurance that government members will cooperate and bring the question of Yukon government investments before the Public Accounts Committee if asked to do so?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, we've actually gone one step beyond that. We've actually gone to the Auditor General of Canada. We have fully briefed and fully disclosed the situation to the Auditor General of Canada.

As I have made reference to on a number of occasions, the Auditor General has been fully cognizant of the government's investment policy. She has been fully cognizant of the investments that have been made, fully cognizant of the procedure associated with the restructuring process itself.

Again, these investments, the events surrounding these particular investments, the restructuring -- they will continue to be fully disclosed. We are in daily contact with the Auditor General of Canada. So certainly we are being very transparent in this regard, and we certainly will abide and adhere to the Auditor General of Canada's advice -- any advice and certainly any information that has been forthcoming.

As I have stated, though -- and I'll just repeat it for the third party member's information -- the transactions that have come to her notice have in all significant respects met up to the letter of the law. That is the *Financial Administration Act*, the *Yukon Act*, bylaws, the regulations, overseeing organizations and so forth.

Mr. Hardy: Mr. Speaker, we still could be losing a massive amount of money. Why don't we let the Public Accounts Committee take a look at it?

Mr. Speaker, we've been pursuing another matter with the acting minister and that is the question of what kinds of things are appropriate for government to invest in? Should they invest in tobacco companies? Or arms manufacturers, for example? Should they invest in casinos or mining companies with terrible environmental records? Has the acting minister had any discussions with her officials about looking for socially responsible and environmentally responsible investment opportunities -- even for a portion of the government's investment portfolio? Has she done that yet?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Speaker, I certainly don't take it upon myself to go on to my computer each and every day to look at the day-to-day investments made by the Gov-

ernment of Yukon. That's not my job. That certainly is not the job of the Premier of the Yukon, nor is it the job of any Cabinet minister on this side of the Legislature. Perhaps if that is the way members opposite would like to operate, so be it, but those are not the procedures and policies that we adhere to on this side of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to adhere to the advice, the sound wise decisions made on behalf of the Government of Yukon by the Department of Finance officials. They have done a great job. Look at the results over the last three years since April of 2004. We have been able to garner not only \$18 million -- \$5 million of which falls within this fiscal year. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd say they are doing a good job.

Mr. Hardy: Well, Mr. Speaker, if I were jeopardizing \$36 million of hardworking Yukon people's money, I would be on the computer every day and following this and trying to straighten it out. I wouldn't just say, "Oh well, it'll straighten itself out -- everything is going to be rosy." Guess what? I'd be doing my job.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it would be nice, it would be refreshing to hear something other than evasions when we ask questions about important matters of principle. Just once it would be nice to show Yukon people that this is a place where good ideas are debated maturely and responsibly. Just once it would be nice to demonstrate that the public good is more important than any political game playing.

A few moments ago I tabled a private member's bill to amend the *Financial Administration Act*. Two simple amendments: one that would encourage the government to make ethical and socially responsible investments and one that would encourage them to invest in things that enhance the environment. When that bill comes up for debate, will the Acting Premier give her assurance that it will receive serious and responsible consideration -- unlike what we have seen with the last two opposition bills that were deliberately sabotaged by the governing party?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I have mentioned on a number of occasions, our government has taken great pride in being able to garner healthy net financial resources housed within the Government of Yukon. That is due in large part to the efforts of the Premier, in his capacity of Minister of Finance, working with his respective colleagues from the other two sister territories, and so forth.

It is also attributed in large part to the good work of the Finance officials housed within the Government of Yukon. As a result of these sound and wise decisions on behalf of the Government of Yukon, on behalf of the taxpayers of Yukon, we continue to invest dollars on the social side of the ledger, as well as for the economic benefit of all Yukoners.

What have the results been? One only has to take a look at \$200 million in net financial resources toward Health and Social Services, toward childcare, whether it be for subsidies for low-income families, or expanding accessible and affordable childcare for the Yukon -- in terms of making more outreach counsellors available to individuals. We continue to invest in the Yukon.

Question re: Social housing

Mr. Hardy: Last week, the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate announced what she termed "a new housing initiative". It's supposed to increase access to affordable and secure housing for women and children. We commend the minister and this government for finally recognizing the need for social housing for families, particularly households headed by women. But this is not a housing initiative -- not yet. It's another study, still looking at what we already know. Another study is not going to change the reality out there.

The reality is that women and children are forced to stay in abusive situations; they are forced to couch-surf for accommodation or to live in overcrowded conditions. This has been going on for years. We know it.

Will the minister tell us why she feels another study looking for statistics that are already well known will help these women?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'm very pleased to be able to speak to this vitally important initiative, and that is an initiative that will address -- as the member opposite alluded to -- women and children, lone-parent families headed by women, and children, who comprise by far the largest percentage of clients waiting on the social housing waiting list here in Whitehorse, as well as victims of violence.

Between now and mid-December, within the month, officials from the Women's Directorate will be undertaking a number of discussions and consultations with women's transition homes, and certainly even with women living in social housing -- women who are on the waiting list. As well, we will be consulting with women's organizations.

The reason we are undertaking these discussions is to determine -- it will inform our government as to the size, type, location, structure, access, security, and qualification guidelines for housing development to meet the need for affordable and secure housing.

Safer communities and protecting families are priorities for our government. They certainly are priorities for me in my capacity, as well.

Mr. Hardy: As if we don't already know this. I can't believe it.

Now, the minister says we will have this report by mid-January -- three months after winter has started in the Yukon. This is just a further example of how this government works the issues and solves very little. Yesterday, yet another study was released, done in three northern territories on women and homelessness, called *You Just Blink and It Can Happen: A Study of Women's Homelessness North of 60*. It says that most women in the north are only a step away from being homeless -- that there are many "hidden homeless" who are forced to live in unhealthy, overcrowded conditions.

That's another report that just came out. Can the minister tell us why she's announcing another study at the same time as this northern study, one that will virtually study the same women and the same problems already documented several times?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, Mr. Speaker, that very report, thanks to the good work of the Yukon Status of Women Coun-

cil -- to which we are also providing funding to advocate for some of these very changes -- we are very pleased to be able to adhere to some of these recommendations made in the report. It's very articulate, and certainly this government has been very proactive in addressing women and children in terms of meeting their housing needs, as well as victims of violence.

When one looks at the specifics in this particular report, one will also read that they also advise and recommend that respective governments and agencies consult with women to determine what kind of housing developments they want to see happen. That is exactly what we intend to do with this consultation, again determining the outcome as to the size, the type, the location, the structure, access, security, and qualification guidelines in order to meet our commitment to quality, safe and affordable housing.

Mr. Hardy: The national report says that two factors are evident in northern homelessness: the high cost and a shortage of housing -- very clear. It recommends increasing the supply of decent, safe low-income housing. I suspect everybody out there in the Yukon knows it if they pay attention.

Now is the time for action, not studies.

If the objective of the minister's study is to increase access to housing for women, I'll save her the cost of time and money. She can get her Cabinet colleague responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation to spend some the government's huge surplus on building social and affordable housing. She can increase the capacity for second-stage transitional housing in our transition home. She can give rent subsidies to families who need them. I'm sure that's what the report is going to come up with.

Why is the minister wasting more time and money on a study on housing when the serious needs of women and families are known and when solutions are so obvious?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I take a different tack on this particular area. I certainly don't view looking at affordable, safe housing options as a waste of time. I see this as an investment in the quality of life for women and children, which they very much deserve. We are working to do just that.

As I mentioned, by mid-December -- within the month -- a report will be on my desk. In the new year, we hope to be able to make some concrete announcements with respect to these discussions, in terms of expanding options available to victims of violence coming out of abusive relationships, in terms of being able to make more options available for affordable and safe housing for women and children. We will be consulting with women's organizations, transition homes, as well as women who are on the waiting list for social housing at this time, to determine the size and location. We feel that it's very critical that we have that input as well as the input that has been reached in the recommendations specific to the report that was just tabled.

Question re: Justice ministers meeting

Mr. Inverarity: Yesterday, the provincial and territorial justice ministers met in Winnipeg and approved the wording of a new protocol on the protection of our most valuable citizens -- our children. Yukoners want our children protected. We take these issues seriously and want our concerns represented on a national agenda. Unfortunately, this government

apparently does not share our concern. This is exactly the forum for discussing such important issues in ensuring Yukoners' concerns are represented. Unfortunately the Minister of Justice is missing in action.

How does the minister plan to ensure that Yukoners' concerns for our justice system are communicated to her federal, provincial and territorial counterparts if she can't even bother attending the meeting?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Prior to the minister answering the question, the Chair has given this Assembly this afternoon a fair amount of latitude; however, the debate is now becoming personalized. So, Member for Porter Creek South, be very careful and do not personalize this debate.

Minister of Justice, you have the floor.

Hon. Ms. Horne: We have our word at the provincial justice ministers meeting in Winnipeg and, thanks to this government, we have a northern protocol. The territorial ministers speak as one at this meeting, and we are firmly in agreement with this protocol. We are acting and ensuring it will go forward.

Question re: RCMP taser use

Mr. Fairclough: I have a question for the Minister of Justice. Yesterday I asked the minister whether she had had any discussions with the RCMP about their policy on tasers and their use. The minister's response was that she supports the RCMP.

I'm assuming that all honourable members in this House support the finest police force in the world; however, that does not prevent us from asking for clarification on important matters of policy.

Can the minister tell the House if she has been able to determine if there is, in fact, a policy relating to the use of tasers and, if so, what is the policy?

Hon. Ms. Horne: As I said yesterday, and I reiterate, I have absolute confidence in the RCMP and the direction they are giving and their training. The Minister of Justice does not put down the regulations for the use of tasers; that is why we have experts who are always kept up-to-date on these issues.

Any reports that come forward with any dangers are forwarded to us.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the minister hasn't been briefed yet and I urge the Government House Leader to ensure that those notes are in front of her. Now since I asked the questions yesterday, I have had several people approach me and call me, concerned about taser use. The recent national news story from last night has also increased the public's concern over this matter. One caller from a rural community told me that a member of her family had been tasered 15 times in one incident. I am concerned Mr. Speaker, as are many, many Yukoners, over the use of this new device.

So can the minister inform the House how many times tasers have been used in the Yukon? How many injuries have resulted from the use of this device and have any deaths been directly or indirectly attributed to their use?

Some Hon. Member: Point of order.

Point of order

Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: With all due respect to the member opposite, I note that specific rule number four states that a question must relate to a matter within the administrative responsibility of the Government of Yukon. This is a policy of the RCMP, not the Government of Yukon.

Speaker: On the point of order, Member for Kluane.

Mr. McRobb: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, there simply is no point of order. This responsibility does lie with the Minister of Justice within the Government of Yukon.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Just for the Member for Kluane's information, I'll make the decision whether or not there is a point of order. All I need from you is the advice on whether it is, or it is not a point of order. My decision is that there is no point of order. You have the floor -- the minister has the floor.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I again reiterate that it does not fall directly under the Minister of Justice to lay out the regulations for the use of tasers. That is why we have experts who work in the department -- to keep up-to-date on these issues. I have full confidence in my staff and in the RCMP that they are keeping up with these regulations.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, the minister needs to be up-to-date on this matter, and I urge her to get a briefing from her department. Now, Mr. Speaker, what appears to be the crux of the problem here is that there haven't been sufficient policies and standards developed. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the report, *Policing in the Yukon*, which I mentioned yesterday, the authors referenced the courts, and I quote from the report, section 410: "Territorial court judges express concerns that there is no oversight on the use of tasers unless a matter reaches court." These concerns are clearly laid out in the report that was done by her department. The courts have expressed their concerns, and the court comes under the minister's portfolio.

This is the simplest question I can possibly ask: will the minister look into these concerns that I have raised, and will she table a response at the earliest possible opportunity?

Hon. Ms. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I again reiterate that we have experts who are kept up-to-date on these issues. I am not an expert in this field. If the member opposite is an expert, I would like to see his credentials or what information he has that we don't have.

Speaker: Time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 8, *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, Department of Community Services. Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 8 -- *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08* -- continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 8, *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*. We will now proceed with general debate on Department of Community Services.

Department of Community Services

Hon. Mr. Hart: I am pleased to share with members of this House the Community Services supplementary budget.

In recent days there has been much discussion on many of the beneficial projects and accomplishments of the Department of Community Services. I thank all the members of this House for their kind words for the work that we do with and for Yukoners in their communities.

I believe it's an exciting time here in the Yukon. Our economy is developing further, which is stimulating more jobs for our citizens. Many projects the Community Services has undertaken in the past couple years have contributed toward that growth.

Community Services does not do all the things on its own. We take a team approach to these projects, and I think the results speak for themselves. We partner with the communities and First Nation governments on many of these projects, and I believe we have a very positive working relationship with our contracting and business community.

I believe that we are effective because of this partnering approach and recognizing that each partner is contributing something valuable and important to the success of that project.

The waterfront project in Carcross comes to mind as a good example. It is a Canada strategic infrastructure fund project made up of six component parts. The total project was created through a close working relationship with the people of Carcross, the South Klondike Local Advisory Council, the Carcross-Tagish First Nation, the local business community, and our departmental planners and officials.

The recently completed footbridge was not the first deliverable in this project. While the footbridge is a wonderful pro-

ject, I firmly believe the first achievement was the creation of a vision for the Carcross waterfront that was equally shared and supported by all the participants. Once we had that, the rest of the development was working toward that shared vision. The work to define that vision in greater detail continues with the community planning initiative that is underway as we speak.

The Department of Community Services takes great pride in the work we do in partnership with the communities and First Nations. We have and continue to utilize the municipal rural infrastructure fund and the Canada strategic infrastructure fund, in conjunction with Canada and the local governments, to make these projects realities.

Although much has been accomplished, there is much more work to be done under these projects. They are significant funding initiatives.

Once completed, I believe that we will have utilized these two funds to build new infrastructure that will significantly improve the quality of life in our Yukon communities: clean drinking water, safe and reliable sewage systems, road upgrades that are safer to travel, and other important projects that add meaningful value to the community, such as new community centres in Marsh Lake and Mayo, waste-water treatment facilities in Carmacks and Dawson, and waterfront projects in Whitehorse and Carcross, which add to community appeal and are designed to help provide benefits to tourism and other community-based economic undertakings.

I would like to express my thanks to Canada and all the local government representatives who worked with us to table the developed agreements that have flowed, or will flow, funds while allowing for accountability structures to be placed and make these projects a reality and provide the desired improvements to the Yukon communities.

I would also like to acknowledge the important contributions from the citizens in the communities who come to the meetings and contribute their views, ideas and share what is important for them in their communities and, in turn, help the development of these new projects and make them realities. Public participation is a key ingredient that helps these projects grow and succeed.

Mr. Chair, a perfect example would be the recent opening of the library in the Carmacks region just the other day -- great participation by the local public and a great facility there in the Tantalus School.

Apart from the benefit and value these projects provide to the community, the economic benefit of these projects has also helped many rural Yukoners to gain employment opportunities in their communities. Local contractors provide their skills and expertise for many aspects of a community-based project and, oftentimes, their familiarity with the local area adds some form of value to the finished product. One thing I find when we conduct the annual community tours is the level of ownership Yukoners possess when we talk about these projects.

The new Mayo community centre, for example -- there is no question that the community is pleased with their new community centre. It serves a number of important and valued functions for the people of Mayo and the surrounding areas. It's a meeting place for the community to gather together, plan,

celebrate, coordinate and otherwise converse and share as a community in a warm, comfortable environment. It is a sport and recreational centre in which residents can come to play sports and games that support healthy lifestyles and physical fitness and give young people something positive to do during the middle of the week, as well as the weekend.

Mayo residents take pride in their new community centre. It is theirs and they will take care of it, boast about it and, no doubt, use it for a wide variety of purposes, including weddings, remembrance services, parties and other celebrations for the community. I'm very pleased with how Community Services serves our community. It is a responsibility our department is proud to have.

Now, I would like to speak about the Community Services budget so we may continue to serve communities and work to improve the quality of life for all Yukoners.

Under operation and maintenance, the budget we are asking for is \$2.783 million. Before I begin in this section, I wish to point out to the members that a change occurred after the budget was developed and printed. As you may have recently heard in the news, the 2008 World Junior Weightlifting Championships will not be held in Whitehorse, as many had hoped would occur. In your budget documents, you will see a line for \$195,000, which was part of the Yukon government's contribution to this event. All funds related to this project have been returned via the organizing host society.

Of the \$2.7 million operating budget, \$713,000 is for the collective agreement increase; \$1.1 million is being allocated to the Southern Lakes flood relief initiative, for the response of various government departments to this event; the Sport for Life program will benefit from \$417,000, which in turn will be applied to benefit young Yukon athletes and their coaches in our communities.

A grant-in-lieu of taxes is increased to \$280,000 for the new Carmacks school and the Whitehorse Airport expansion and increase in property values.

Homeowners grants are increased by \$61,000 due to the increase in the number of eligible properties; for operation and maintenance revenue, on the revenue side, we are forecasting an increase of \$500,000 in general property tax attributed to an increase in new properties and assessment values.

Fines and administration penalties related to labour services and motor vehicle registrations will generate an extra \$13,000 in revenue. Yukon's increased economic activity has stimulated increased commercial vehicle and other miscellaneous motor vehicle revenue by over \$178,000.

Operation and maintenance recoveries -- the department will be recovering \$166,000 from an increase in recovery from the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Housing Corporation with a collective agreement increase. This is related to the shared corporate service approach, and this recovery is for staff time in relation to human resources, financial systems, plus policy and communication support. \$42,000 is attributed to an increase in recoveries due to municipal reassessment and increased assessment values of property. Just over \$1 million is expected from the federal disaster financial assistance agreement for flood relief initiative for the flooding impacts to the

property owners in Upper Liard, Marsh Lake and Lake Laberge. There is \$13,000 for the joint emergency preparedness program planned expenditure that did not come to fruition.

Mr. Chair, my department is seeking \$14.5 million in capital. This includes a revote approval of \$16.1 million of capital funds for the following programs and initiatives: \$55,000 in a fire management program to complete installation of the Dawson City refuelling system and the design of a facility at Ross River initial attack air tanker base to house wildland fire management personnel; \$114,000 to complete work at the athletes village; \$864,000 to complete the unfinished work at athletes village, transitioning it to the permanent residence; \$46,000 to complete projects for a domestic well program; \$104,000 to complete a number of projects for the domestic well program. And I would just say that this is a new program put in place by this government that is being well received as has been demonstrated by the uptake.

It also includes \$210,000 to purchase a potable water drinking delivery truck for Carcross. There is \$75,000 for the Army Beach community well to complete additional design work, part of which included a consultation and survey of the local community. There is \$180,000 to repair the Destruction Bay septic system and to complete the design of the pilot water systems at Ross River, Old Crow and Mendenhall.

It includes \$21,000 for decommissioning of the old Destruction Bay sewage lagoon, \$19,000 for the river dike protection in Mayo to facilitate removal and treatment of hydrocarbon-contaminated soil, \$29,000 to complete repairs to the walking bridge in Ross River, \$415,000 for the riverbank stabilization in Old Crow to complete that project.

It includes \$5.2 million for the Canada strategic infrastructure fund, which includes \$3.3 million for the Carmacks sewage treatment, \$239,000 for the Carcross waterfront, and \$1.6 million for the Whitehorse waterfront program.

There is \$586,000 for the municipal rural infrastructure fund projects, including \$209,000 in extraordinary, non-recoverable funding to complete the work on the Mayo community centre, \$180,000 in funding for the Hamilton Boulevard extension to complete the preliminary design and environmental assessment, \$157,000 for the Mount Sima ski chalet, and \$40,000 for the Lakeview Avenue water and sewer installation in Watson Lake.

A total of \$7.62 million is for the work related to residential land development projects, which include \$641,000 for the Hot Springs Road subdivision, \$6.6 million for the Mount Sima Road, and \$355,000 for Copper Ridge.

There is \$558,000 in Corporate Services branch for the office furniture and computer equipment and systems. We are also seeking approval for \$850,000 to contribute toward the construction of a youth and elders activity centre in Burwash Landing.

\$63,000 contribution to the heritage house, Habitat for Humanity, for the purchase of lot 895 in Copper Ridge in support of the next Habitat for Humanity project; \$41,000 for wage and collective agreement increases; \$125,000 to conduct an engineering review of the Upper Liard and Marsh Lake flood plains to examine the big picture and potential high-water

situations in the future and what preventive measures may be considered to avoid or reduce impact for high water conditions in the future.

We are seeking approval of \$2.2 million for the municipal rural infrastructure fund to continue improving the health and safety and economic opportunities for our communities. These projects have already been announced and, in some cases, require a bit more information and more funding, or a change in allocation of design, in order to complete the project.

These include: \$530,000 for increased project cost for the small-diameter pipe project with the Selkirk First Nation; \$875,000 for the Hamilton Boulevard extension project; \$286,000 for the Dawson City recreation centre repairs to address heat loss issues and operational deficiencies; \$234,000 to upgrade the cemetery access road with the Na Cho Nyak Dun First Nation; \$150,000 for the Dawson City playground; \$168,000 for the waste-water disposal facility with the Selkirk First Nation in Pelly Crossing.

We are lapsing \$850,000 for the Army Beach community well due to the additional consultation and research required to find a suitable solution, leaving construction to occur in 2008-09. The Taku subdivision and Carcross second access projects are delayed pending completion of community planning work, which is why there is also a lapse of \$700,000 and \$550,000 respectively.

The CSIF base sewage treatment project for Carmacks is being decreased by \$1.1 million as a result of clarification of the treatment type and an updating of an agreement with the Village of Carmacks, and the anticipated plans are that only approximately \$3 million will be required in 2007-08; 50 per cent of this is recoverable under the CSIF agreement with Canada.

\$111,000 is being lapsed in the MRIF account to reflect a revised 2007-08 project estimate for the Lakeview Avenue water and sewer installation in Watson Lake and the water and sewer road improvements with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

Capital recoveries: you will see in the document a little over \$10 million for capital recoveries. This includes the revote approval of \$10.4 million associated with the previous revoted capital expenditures. There is \$649,000 in recoveries under MRIF; \$143,000 for Dawson City recreation affairs, \$75,000 for the Dawson City playground; \$84,000 for the Selkirk First Nation waste-water disposal facility; \$117,000 for the Na Cho Nyak Dun First Nation cemetery access road upgrade; \$265,000 for the Selkirk First Nation small-diameter pipe water system; and a decrease of \$35,000 for the Watson Lake water and sewer and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations water and sewer project, which includes some road upgrades as well.

\$875,000 represents the City of Whitehorse contribution for the Hamilton Boulevard project, which is well underway now. We are lapsing \$416,000 for projects in the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund. There is a \$560,000 decrease related to the Carmacks sewage treatment plant project and an increase of \$144,000 for the Dawson City sewage treatment plant project.

Still with capital lapses, \$1.6 million is for the Mount Lorne rural residential project. At the beginning of my presentation, I acknowledged the positive work and relationship we strive to develop with our partners in the projects we undertake. This positive relationship can only be possible with a staff and the caring of focused individuals who know their jobs and do them well.

Community Services is fortunate to have such staff; they are focused on making our communities safer and healthier places to live and make home. They are committed to helping their fellow Yukoners when crisis situations arise, as we have witnessed in a number of emergency situations in our recent history. I am very proud of our Community Services staff, the good job they do for Yukoners and their commitment to our communities and their citizens. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Fairclough: I'm pleased to respond to the minister's budget in Community Services. There are a few departments that really affect the communities, and this one does, particularly with the line items broken down like this. We've always asked the departments, particularly Community Services, if they can clearly provide us with a community breakdown of the dollar amounts, and we haven't got that. I'd appreciate it if the minister could provide that to us. It makes it easier in passing this message on -- that this is what government is spending in your community. So I'm hoping the minister can do that.

We've questioned this department in the past, and I can't help but notice that, although this is a supplementary budget, we do have a fairly large increase in expenditures in this department, some of which the minister explained and others we have questions on, of course.

I didn't get all the figures the minister read out this afternoon, and I'd appreciate it if the minister could provide that to us. I tried to follow along in the breakdown of the different projects, and the numbers are not matching what we have been provided -- here in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*. So I'd appreciate it if the minister can do that. I'll just carry on if I get confirmation of that.

Hon. Mr. Hart: The information could be obtained from *Hansard* but if we go line by line, or if the member has specific lines he wants a breakdown on, I'm more than happy to provide a specific breakdown on those items. The member opposite knows that we do what we can to assist him and make the request where it's possible to do so.

Mr. Fairclough: I appreciate that, and I look forward to that information and the community breakdown. Mr. Chair, there is a fairly large increase in the operation and maintenance expenditures in this budget. The minister did give us a brief overview of it, something to do with the collective bargaining agreement, but I did not get a complete answer for the \$2.7 million that is registered here. What exactly is that to go to? Could the minister provide that information?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, many of the items in the supplementary budget are revotes for projects that are already underway. I could go through all of them again. If he wishes, I could review my speech from the opening address. However, if he has something specific, I could provide a

breakdown, maybe on community development. You know, we're looking at an increase of \$1.1 million. This is an increase that consists of \$177,000 for an increase of wages; \$6,000 for a facility agreement with YEU; again, \$417,000 for Yukon Sport for Life program, which I did indicate; \$280,000 for increase in grants in lieu of taxes; and \$61,000 for an increase of homeowners grant due to the increase in the number of eligible properties.

I did qualify it in my initial address that there was \$195,000 in that amount for the world weightlifting championship that has been included. That has been withdrawn, but it is included in that amount.

Under protective services, there is \$1.3 million: a large increase of \$1.1 million to the Southern Lakes area flood assistance program that we provided to the members of Marsh Lake and Lake Laberge, and anyone who was under the flood process. We also had a \$191,000 increase in wages due to the collective agreement.

Those are the two major program increases. Again, other increases in the department are due to the collective agreement, those being in corporate services and in consumer and safety services -- the major increase again due to the collective agreement of \$188,000 and \$148,000, respectively.

Mr. Fairclough: Those increases due to the collective agreement, were those just an oversight in the spring, and we're now seeing corrections? Why are we seeing that increase when it wasn't recognized in the spring?

Hon. Mr. Hart: In our negotiation, by the time we completed, it was after March 31 of this year. There will be an increase in all the departments relative to this. This is reflective of all the entries, as per our collective agreement, which was basically taking place as of the first pay in July, if memory serves me right.

Mr. Fairclough: I have noticed that in all the departments too.

Can the minister tell us if there is any increase in FTEs in this department, maybe directly reflective of the increase in O&M?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Over the course of the year, we have had a few FTE increases. In general, the increases are consistent with our collective agreement.

Mr. Fairclough: I haven't heard that it was a result of this increase in operation and maintenance that we would see more FTEs. If there is, I would appreciate if the minister could provide us with that information.

I have noticed, also, that the department is spending a lot more money on office space and furniture. Can the minister explain why we are seeing close to a 50-percent increase in this spending? Is it because we are looking at upgrading computers? We do this all the time, and other departments have reflected that, but mostly this is done in the spring. I am just wondering why we are seeing such a huge increase in a supplementary budget like this.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I recognize the member opposite's concern with regard to office equipment and furniture. However, I also know that this particular item is incorrectly identified. The actual amount of money is an increase and is due for

a revote for systems. It is dealing with the integrated records information management system -- RIMS -- and it is also for the driver record system implementation.

Really, it's for the equipment needed to make those systems work. It is basically a revote of money that has been recorded. There have been difficulties getting the equipment here and putting the systems into place.

It's not a grandmother's rocking chair or a chair for anybody to be comfortable in. It's really system oriented. It's not really furniture.

Mr. Fairclough: Can the minister explain in more detail the statement he made about the amounts being incorrectly identified? Is it in the spring's budget as incorrectly identified or is it what is before us now? If so, what is the real amount?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As I stated, it is really the heading that is not identified appropriately. The money is of course identified correctly in the spring as well as now. The thing is, it should be systems and equipment and not office furniture. My reference to "incorrect" is to do with the actual heading itself. Equipment and everything are all identified previously and that is the method we are using.

Mr. Fairclough: Perhaps we'll see a change in the spring budget in these line items as they are identified. Now regarding the computers -- which is a fairly large amount -- does that bring us up to speed? I know this is ongoing, but we're always looking at ensuring that we do have the proper equipment in these offices. I say that because this is a large amount versus only months ago. It was supposed to be brought forward in the spring.

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, although it may seem large, it is just the commencement of getting our data input into the system. It is the start of our process. It is in order to meet the requirement that is being requested by the Government of Canada with regard to enhanced drivers' licences. A substantial amount of money will have to be put into drivers' records in order to bring us up to standard and meet the Canadian standard that is going to be required right across Canada in order to accommodate the request from Homeland Security in the U.S. with regard to using a driver's licence for border crossings.

As I said, this amount of money is just a commencement of inputting of the data. We anticipate a substantial increase in this area in order to bring us current. Once Canada has identified that we have the extension from the U.S., we will have to move fairly quickly, and it will be a fairly hefty cost in the future to upgrade the system so that it can meet the international standard. I am advised that we will know sometime early in April what has to be done, and just how long we have to get it done.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that explanation. Does the minister have an estimate of what the cost would be? There is a date of April that has been given now. We are expecting this new equipment in all the communities that have the services provided to the citizens, the territorial agents.

Hon. Mr. Hart: On this particular issue, we are just in the process of completing our study. We anticipate that by April we will be notified of what exactly will be required.

Whether or not that will determine what needs to be done on our part -- we are not quite sure whether we will be able to deliver that service in the rural areas right now. We are very hopeful that we will be able to do so, but the restrictions on the makeup of the licence and all that may prevent us from doing that. But we will know then.

We don't have an indication right now as to what the real cost will be. We do anticipate that the cost of the program, for us to get moving, will be somewhere in excess of \$2 million if it goes ahead.

Mr. Fairclough: This is pretty important for rural residents, as they do use the territorial agents in the communities for many things. If anything, what they would like to see is an increase in service, not a reduction. Has any notification been given to the territorial agents outlining the possibility of a reduction of some of the services that are now provided?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We're not reducing any of our services currently underway through our territorial agents. We are following the process that's outlined right now. Members in rural areas can still register on-line. We only have to deal with this situation when we can determine from Ottawa, sometime in April, what is required of us for this new enhanced driver's licence. We will not know specifically until that time -- until we are advised by Ottawa -- specifically what we have to do.

It may be, for example, that you will still not be able to get your driver's licence on the same day right in Whitehorse. You may have to wait a week to get your driver's licence, whether it's in Whitehorse or Dawson City. It depends on what the makeup is, where the licence gets made up, and how it gets made up.

Currently we are doing our survey and getting our data ready to input into the system. Once we've identified what that system is, we will try to look at recovering some dollars from Canada to the greatest extent possible. But right now, that's a cost we're looking at having to take on in order to meet the minimum standard required by the Government of Canada.

Currently it's a necessary step. It's a difficult step for all of the northern territories because most of them are in the same situation we are with respect to their drivers' licences, although we have more of them than the other two jurisdictions -- obviously, because we have more highways.

Our biggest concern right now is getting our data set in place so that when the time comes in April, and if we do -- worst case scenario -- have to work it off, we'll move ahead.

This April deadline is basically pending the completion of the pilot project currently in place between the Province of British Columbia and the State of Washington, which is due to expire sometime in March. That's why April is the deadline. It may actually be late April before we find out. But, in essence, we have to be prepared.

The other aspect too is, as I mentioned earlier, that an extension does have to be obtained by Canada from the U.S. for at least a year.

All these things are coming into play and, depending on what it is, we are working closely with the Government of Canada on this issue, and we are very hopeful that we will be able to meet our requirements and get the enhanced driver's

licence done in time for all Yukoners to take advantage of it, and to meet the requirements of Canada.

Mr. Fairclough: That's simply because what we have now will not be recognized by the United States.

Is the Department of Community Services working with other departments to ensure that other pieces of identification are, I guess, recognized elsewhere, other than in the Yukon Territory? I know the Yukon Liquor Corporation has worked on this in the past, but who else is involved in this? Is the Department of Justice involved?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are working with all our departments within the government; we are working with the departments of Highways and Public Works, Justice and Tourism -- all the departments that are affected by the use of drivers' licences.

In addition, we are working with all the other motor vehicle departments throughout Canada in all 12 other jurisdictions. We are working on this particular enhanced driver's licence. Again, it's a very specialized field and a specialized process, and we would like to piggyback on anyone else's system to keep the cost controlled for us. There will be a substantial cost for us regardless. If we can piggyback with someone else, it will be even more cost-effective for us.

In essence, we are working with all the other jurisdictions, including all the departments affected by the driver's licence, which basically is all of government, to get the information and data in place and keep them apprised of the options that are coming.

Mr. Fairclough: As I understand it, these new licences could be packing a lot of information on them, and we're depending a lot upon an extension from the United States. Does the government have a backup plan, or how are we going to address this problem if we don't get this extension? Or is the minister confident in working with others across Canada that we, in fact --

Power outage from 2:50 p.m. to 3:24 p.m.

Chair: I now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 8, *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, Department of Community Services.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister has provided information in regard to the drivers' licences, and I understand that. Part of the departmental objectives is working with the Liquor Corporation and Yukon Housing Corporation to deliver the territorial agent services in the Yukon. Has the department met with the communities, and have they expressed any interest in providing more services through the agents than are presently provided?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We have meetings twice a year with the managers of all our territorial facilities throughout the Yukon, and we discuss the demands that are provided in each individual area and address those, based on the demand.

Mr. Fairclough: I know that there has been interest in making improvements for territorial agents in the communities. One in particular was the registration of societies. You can't do that through the territorial agents, nor can they accept monies

to be registered as a society. I'd ask the minister to look into that, and maybe that's one of the improvements that could be made in one of the meetings that he has with the communities.

I just wanted to back up a little bit in regard to this driver's licence and making improvements to it. As I recall, in the past year, monies have been identified to make this improvement. I know the minister talks about revotes, and I believe the amount that was identified in the past was \$2 million. It was reiterated again by the minister as possibly costing that much. But what happened to that dollar amount? Did it just get bumped back into general revenues?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The previous expenditures were for improving our baseline driver's licence, just the ordinary everyday driver's licence for all Yukoners. What we are looking at in the future -- possibly to meet the American requirements for border crossing -- is the enhanced driver's licence. It has a substantial amount of money attached to it because it is going to be an enhanced driver's licence.

Mr. Fairclough: The wait might be in the interest of the government simply because there will be a demand for the passports to be used for identification more than anything else. I wanted to ask the minister a couple of questions in regard to projects in communities. This question was asked by my colleague from Vuntut Gwitchin in regard to the water well in Old Crow and the drinking water supply. Can the minister give us an update as to where the project is now and what we can expect over the next little while?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are in the process of the design to deal with the issue of arsenic in the water. That process is underway and we anticipate it will go along as we indicated, and hopefully it will be installed in the time that has been allocated for this project.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister didn't say when this will be installed. Are we expecting this to be reflected in the spring budget?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are expecting upgrades to happen in Ross River and Old Crow community wells starting in 2008. Hopefully they will be completed in 2009.

Mr. Fairclough: If there is any additional information on that, I would appreciate being updated as the project continues.

The minister talked about flood and erosion control and he listed off what is being done. As I read the supplementary budget and the total amounts for the year for flood and erosion control, I got a different number than the minister did. I think he said \$1.1 million. There is now a total of \$1.3 million. Can the minister elaborate a bit more on the kind of work that was done in Marsh Lake and what other departments have been involved?

As I looked through the budget, I noticed there was \$400,000 in the Yukon Housing Corporation budget in regard to the Yukon flood relief program. I heard the minister give some explanation of this dollar amount -- but not exactly to the type of flooding we were experiencing this past summer.

I notice it is a Yukon Housing Corporation line item under capital expenditures, but it wasn't clearly laid out anywhere in Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Hart: During the flood, many departments were involved in mitigating our responses to alleviating the difficulties for the victims of the flood. Specifically, the Department of Highways and Public Works, Community Services and Health and Social Services, in addition to our Emergency Measures Organization, along with volunteer fire departments, all assisted in the process.

The monies allocated under Community Services are directly related to our departmental expenditures in relation to the flood. The member opposite is discussing funds in Yukon Housing Corporation. That money was the Yukon government's response to providing the 2007 flood relief initiative, to assist property owners in the affected flood areas. Homeowners who have experienced damage in their principal residence can receive grants, and owners of recreational properties can receive loans at zero percent interest.

Owners of flood-damaged property are encouraged to contact us, or go through Yukon Housing Corporation, to get their claim in for the damage, depending upon whether it's a recreational or primary residence. That money, through Yukon Housing Corporation, is to assist all the flood victims. There will be more expenditures between now and the summer. We won't know what they are until such time as we're finished with the assessments, based on the demand we get from the flood victims, as well as doing our due diligence and having our experts go into the field to determine what needs to be done in order to assist the flood victims.

As I said, until such time as we have all the applications in front of us -- and we don't anticipate getting that until probably until the late spring -- then we can go on, because many of the repairs will not be able to be enforced or completed until such time as the ice is off the lake and we can work from there. The dollars we have, as I said, for Community Services are for a number of departments to deal with a range of expenses incurred while the flood was in process.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that explanation. Mr. Chair, can the minister provide the House with any plans to prevent this type of flooding, particularly in the Marsh Lake area?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are in the process of reviewing our options. We were discussing with available experts to garner their options on what we may do to look at solving the situation in the interim, how we deal with the situation we're currently mitigating, and we're looking at their assistance to help us in the long term on the problem.

I also have indicated we have set up a meeting in which we will discuss these options with the local residents in Marsh Lake, and that's well underway to getting there.

We do have to work, obviously, in direct relationship with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, our own Department of Environment, and we have to deal with the permitting required for all these items -- the ways in which people are going to be trying to assist themselves in protecting their properties. But again, we are coordinating our effort with all the agencies involved in dealing with permits and to assist these areas. We are working with our external agencies. As I mentioned, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment, as well as pro-

professionals from other jurisdictions who have flood expertise or experience, are assisting us to put together some options. Once we have those options in front of us, we'll be communicating that to the people who will be directly affected.

Mr. Fairclough: Can the minister also explain what the department plans to do for the protection of the residents from the spring melt in Old Crow in regard to the waste disposal facility and the sewage lagoon? Does the department have any plans to ensure that there is protection?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Obviously, as I indicated in my preamble, we had monies set aside to complete the riverbank stabilization, which we anticipate will assist by controlling the water that gets into the village. We have just completed a study with regard to the solid waste facility, which indicates that it is reasonably protected from the water situation. In addition to that, Mr. Chair, we are in the process of doing an assessment of all our dumps throughout the Yukon, and we anticipate the tender for that work to be taking place earlier in the new year.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister also identified \$19,000 for removing some contaminated soil in the dike in Mayo. Can the minister elaborate more on this \$19,000 expenditure, if in fact that was the amount?

Hon. Mr. Hart: That is a carry-over expenditure with regard to that project. That project is proceeding.

Mr. Fairclough: I thank the minister for that. Obviously, there is an increase of awareness of flooding in and around the territory and many communities have been watching closely all summer. For example, the Yukon River was unusually high all summer and it affected even the salmon harvest in many places. I know the community of Carmacks is always able to gauge the height of the river by how much of the island it's covering, just offshore from the community. It has basically been covered with water all summer. There possibly could be this awareness again by community people as soon as the spring melt arrives. I think there's more and more awareness, simply because people are feeling our climate changing.

Now, I have brought many issues to the minister's attention in the past, particularly when it comes to road improvements in the communities and so on. I know the highways do have a responsibility here, but there are always road and street upgrades that I've asked for through this minister, whether it's in the community of Stewart Crossing or Pelly Crossing.

When I asked the minister to look into doing some chipsealing in the community of Pelly Crossing, across the river on the new subdivision, the answer I got was that this is a First Nation road -- in fact, the department has put money into doing some chipsealing, but I think it was the wrong road that was chipsealed many, many years ago. I understand that this is a First Nation road; it basically branches off the highway close to the bridge and continues on to Pelly Farm. This is within the community boundaries; it is an unincorporated community and government has done a lot of chipsealing and road improvements in the past.

This could be done here too. I say it because many have raised this issue with me again. It's a rough road, and it gets rough very quickly. Even though they do grade it and water it down in the summertime, it does have a lot of washboard basi-

cally throughout the summer, and accidents have happened along that road.

It was not reflecting in the spring budget, and I can't help but notice that there is a huge reduction in roads and street upgrades, but I would ask the minister if he could look into that and perhaps meet with the First Nation to see if we can make that improvement to that community.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member for his question with regard to the community and the chipsealing.

I would also indicate that the Selkirk First Nation does have the availability to tax gas, like every other First Nation. That fund can be utilized for road construction. We also could assist the First Nation in an application for that funding. We could also assist the First Nation in dealing with looking at opportunities of where they might be able to get funding from in other areas.

We could coordinate, as we do with other municipalities, when the Highways and Public Works department comes through with the chipseal to keep the cost even lower. But it's a matter of cooperation and working with community. We would be more than happy to assist the First Nation there with dealing with an application under the gas tax to get this worked on.

Mr. Fairclough: It shouldn't be a problem for governments to do those improvements to community roads. We have seen millions of dollars dedicated to improvements to the Campbell Highway. This is a safety issue -- basically getting rid of the gravel road within an unincorporated community.

I just wanted to thank the minister for attending the opening of the library in Carmacks. It was good to see the minister there and also my colleague from Porter Creek South, who has an interest in computers, and so on, in the school, so we did another tour of the school. I asked one of my constituents to sit down and talk with the minister in regard to the old school, particularly the gym. I did notice the minister was talking with that member. I brought this to the government's attention in the past, about what to do with the old school.

I realize most of it will be torn down but, as I understand it, the gym part and the dressing room, boiler room and so on, still have about a 15- to 20-year lifespan. The interest from the community is to turn it into some recreation facility, like a swimming pool and so on, which is badly needed in that community right now.

Will the minister take this concern and interest forward before the building disappears?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for having his constituent discuss this issue with me the other night. I did discuss it with him at great length and provided him with pretty good statistics with regard to that facility. I indicated to that individual that a substantial amount of engineering work had gone into reviewing that building, as well as what it could be utilized for. Basically the options given back to us were there was a bigger risk with regard to that building's proximity to the current school, as it would be more of a hazard to the current facility than maintaining it.

The other issue I discussed with the constituent was that, regardless of what the building was utilized for, the municipal-

ity would have to accept the responsibility of that building, along with the O&M that goes with it.

I also advised that pools are very expensive facilities to maintain. They require a lot of work, a lot of engineering, remodelling, replacing -- retrofitting a gym. There are huge costs involved in that process -- for what you actually gain out of it.

Most of our municipalities, as well as unincorporated hamlets throughout the Yukon, may have a pool but it's operated pretty much in the summer months and on a very limited basis. But that seems to be satisfactory in many of those places because they are all well aware of what the cost of operation and maintenance is to operate a heated facility and/or a covered facility in that process. I know, having discussed it with the mayor in Carmacks, that they are right now trying to look at ways and means of getting their current recreation facility down to a much more energy-efficient process so that they can reduce their operation and maintenance costs and meet their commitments on that basis.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, it doesn't have to be the way the minister says, particularly if they were to tie the heating system into the school. It could be very much part of the school activities, and it could be cost-shared. I didn't hear the minister say that.

Mr. Chair, the minister knows that phase 1 of the recreation centre in Carmacks was completed. Is there any interest by this government to complete phase 2 of this recreation complex?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, this facility belongs to the Village of Carmacks. It is their facility. They are responsible for the operation and maintenance of it. As I indicated earlier, they are looking at ways to increase the efficiency of the energy aspect of that particular facility and from what I understand, phase 2 of that project will commence once they are able to combat their own O&M costs on the current facility.

Mr. Fairclough: No work is being done, in other words. Can the minister tell us how the department plans to help the municipality out in regard to the energy efficiency of this building?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We are working with the municipality -- at their request -- on assisting and ideas, and we're more than happy to work with the municipality if they plan to move ahead on phase 2.

Mr. Fairclough: I would hope that there is something a little more solid from the minister. There is something to be learned from this building. It is a great recreation building, but I don't think there was a lot of emphasis at the time to look at energy efficiency. Is this something that the department will ensure isn't placed with any other recreation facility that is built?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, I think that, given the climate change situation, the cost of fuel that we are looking at over the last couple of years has stressed the importance of ensuring that all buildings maintained by the government meet efficiency standards in order to keep the operation and maintenance costs at least to the same amount that they are currently -- or were currently -- with the improvements or reducing the cost, where possible.

I would like to emphasize to the member opposite that, when we built the recreation facility in Marsh Lake, it was built with the emphasis on energy efficiency. Likewise, for the member opposite, the recreation facility in his own riding of Mayo was built with energy efficiency aspects built into the entire facility. The operation and maintenance costs for that facility -- we anticipate -- will be substantially less than what they were to operate the previous facility.

Mr. Fairclough: Well, let's get into that particular project then. I believe I asked this question in the spring, when \$477,000 was identified for completion of the Mayo recreation centre. We now have an additional \$209,000. That brings us close to \$700,000 for these unforeseen issues that cropped up in building this recreation complex. Can the minister give an explanation of why we have an additional amount for the completion when, just months ago, there was an amount identified for the completion of this recreation centre?

Hon. Mr. Hart: It is not an increase. It's merely a revote to complete the project. It's not an increase to the project. It's part of the actual project cost, and it's merely a revote to complete the work.

Mr. Fairclough: We normally see revotes come in after the fiscal year, and we're starting to deal with them now in supplementary budgets.

Are there any plans within this department to build a recreation facility in Old Crow?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The member opposite is probably well aware from talking to his counterpart that Community Services is working closely with the Old Crow Recreation Society on their current issues regarding their facility. Right now, we're discussing the feasibility study that was completed. We're also looking at addressing some of the issues with respect to funding for the capital costs, managing the O&M costs, and determining ongoing staffing, technical expertise and such.

Because Old Crow is a very difficult place to get specialists, it's important that the facility has mechanical and technical issues that can be handled appropriately. We continue to work with the Old Crow Recreation Society and the recreation complex working group on their needs. We anticipate that, once we are able to sit down and finalize some of these issues with respect to the funding, staffing, et cetera, that we'll be able to move ahead and look at getting a facility that the citizens of Old Crow can realistically look after.

Mr. Fairclough: The community of Carmacks has been designing this sewage treatment system now for quite sometime -- this mechanical plant that they have. They have now gone to this membrane system. A number of delays have cropped up and we still don't see this treatment facility built. I know that work has been done to design this facility.

I noticed that in this supplementary budget we are seeing an increase of \$2.2 million. I am not exactly sure what this is -- whether or not the minister is going to say it's a revote again. I noticed that in his opening remarks he said that, due to the changes in the design of this sewage treatment facility, the cost of the facility has been reduced by \$1.1 million. I could be wrong about what I heard the minister say. Perhaps he could

explain these expenditures a bit more and the decrease in the cost of the design.

Hon. Mr. Hart: We have been working very closely with the Village of Carmacks on this particular project. The member opposite will probably remember that we also worked with the village, assisting them to consult with the residents on exactly what specific type of facility the residents prefer to utilize. We went through that exercise with the Village of Carmacks. The results came in and the mayor advised us that they wished to proceed with the mechanical facility. That was the wish of the majority of her residents. Thus, we are well on our way with that process.

We have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Village of Carmacks. We are revoting the money. This is due to a revote to complete the design stage and get it out to tender for the facility. We hope to do that early in the new year.

Mr. Fairclough: I'd like to ask the minister whether it has been changed since the last survey that was done in the community, because I believe that what they voted on was a membrane system. There's the mechanical plan and the membrane system and there's a sewage lagoon system that they were using. From my understanding, the membrane system was the more expensive system than the aerated sewage lagoon.

Hon. Mr. Hart: The consultation completed was in conjunction with the Village of Carmacks, and the Department of Community Services -- which assisted in that particular venue we're dealing with -- provided the residents a choice of mechanical sewage facility and/or aerated sewage lagoon.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister, in his opening remarks, said this was a decrease in cost of the total amount and he mentioned \$1.1 million. Can the minister explain that one?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, we anticipate that we will gain some monies with the project, because we have already completed some partial design work on this project. However, until such time as the project is complete and we get the finality of what the dollars and cents will be for this facility, we won't know what the true dollar costs are.

Mr. Fairclough: The community is anxiously waiting for that. Part of what would make it an improvement is, once that facility is done and in place and the sewage lines are in place, then some research could be done to the River Drive Road that goes down close to the river there.

I wanted to ask the minister about the municipal rural infrastructure fund. One of them that I did mention was in regard to the community of Mayo and the recreation facility there. There is a project here that I did ask about before. Again, it's in my riding and it's with the Selkirk First Nation, the community of Pelly Crossing and it's with the small-diameter pipe water system that's there.

Can the minister tell us if in fact there is a final dollar amount to this project and, if so, what is it?

Hon. Mr. Hart: There was a \$530,000 increase, which was approved under MRIF due to tender costs being higher than the original estimates, for a total revised vote of this project under MRIF of \$2.2 million. On that particular one, we're still waiting for the federal government to sign off on that \$530,000. During our recent community tour, this situation was

brought up by the First Nation, and we have forwarded a letter on to the federal minister, asking him that these funds be released as soon as possible. The funding has been signed on our part already, and it is waiting for the federal minister to get this item off so that the final cheque can be issued to the First Nation.

Mr. Fairclough: Now, Mr. Chair, the minister said \$2.2 million or close to that, and that is what has been the revised vote to date. Now, what is the total cost of this project? Has it been determined yet?

Hon. Mr. Hart: With regard to the total cost of the projects, \$2.2 million is what is eligible under the MRIF program. That's what we're responsible for as far as the project goes. Anything over and above that is the responsibility of the First Nation, and they're responsible for completing the project within the lines of the original balance that they incurred prior to submitting it to us for approval.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, can the minister tell us what the total cost of that project is? He must know, because we're approving monies, we're letting out tenders and so on. But what is the total cost of that project?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, we're not putting out the tenders. The First Nation does the tendering. The applicant does the tendering. We approve the funding based on what the applicant submits to the committee. They submit their total costs to us and we determine whether or not the costs are eligible under MRIF, and a decision is rendered by the technical committee. They review those technical costs. They assess those costs where they can and the approval is based on what the applicant submits to us. The funds are disbursed as per the agreement that we sign with the applicant under MRIF, but the tendering and all that facility is the responsibility of the applicant -- in this case the First Nation. They are the ones who know what the actual total cost of the project is. We provide the funding as per the original application under the MRIF process.

Mr. Fairclough: I can't believe that neither the minister nor the department knows the cost of this project. There is no way that the minister does not know what that cost is, or even approximately what the total cost of this project is. The minister knows it and it is information -- as government funds and government money and taxpayers' dollars are funding this. Also, the minister called it a pilot project, and so it is for all to see how it operates -- including the costs of the project. Is the minister able to get the total cost of this project?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Well, obviously, given our parameters of the program itself, we could estimate the total project to cost approximately \$3.4 million.

Mr. Fairclough: I am a bit concerned with this project. The minister did say the increase in this line item in this supplementary budget of \$530,000, which hasn't been approved by the federal government yet, is due to the increase in tender costs. It is listed in the books, and questions should be asked of this. Can the minister tell us: is it due to the fact that problems have come up in regard to putting this water system in?

I've been in the community of Pelly Crossing many times this summer. I've seen the work that is being done -- the pipe is

being laid -- and I know that the workers have stayed in the Carmacks Hotel and commute back and forth. We've seen a crew come in to lay the pipe under the river and they ran into problems. That crew disappeared and another crew of experts came in from Alberta to again drill under the river and try to put this pipe across to the other side and force the casings through as they do the pipe. Again, they ran into some heavy bedrock and it became a problem.

Has this problem been resolved or are we now looking at perhaps a different system and putting the piped water system up in the air along the bridge?

Hon. Mr. Hart: As the member opposite has indicated, the project is not yet complete. We have submitted our claim for the additional monies, as per the request of the applicant, for additional costs of the project that they submitted to the MRIF program. Those costs have been determined. The eligible aspect of those costs has been identified as \$530,000, which we submitted as an overage on the project itself. It was concurred with by the committee, signed off by me, and now it is off to the federal minister for signing.

The project, as I said, is not complete. The member opposite knows that. We haven't seen any of the First Nation's final estimates, as far as the invoices go. The actual specific cost of the project -- I can't provide the member opposite with that particular item. Right now, the First Nation is in charge of managing this particular project. They are in charge of the tendering and they are in charge of hiring the drillers to drill under the water. I assume that, if they had a contract for a specific amount, and it was under a specific time, then those are the obligations the contractor will have to abide by.

If, in fact, they cannot reach under the water in a complete process, then that is something the First Nation can deal with the contractor on, with regard to that.

If they have a specific amount under that contract, then I would have to assume they haven't exceeded that amount, and that is the amount of money that is going to be the maximum there. As I said, I haven't received anything specific from the First Nation on its completion yet, and I won't know until I get the final invoices from them.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Chair, I cannot believe that government would operate in this manner. I cannot believe that they would not know the numbers in approving any dollar amount. I cannot believe this. This has been mentioned many times in this House. It was said by the Premier and others who responded to the budget speeches that this was a pilot project. It was to be monitored by government to see how well it worked, and that's what pilot projects were all about. But I've seen some pilot projects that remained as pilot projects forever and no one else followed suit. A prime example was the mechanical sewage plant in Carmacks, which is still a mechanical plant and it still is a pilot project. I'm hoping the minister could give us more information on this. I'm sure that they do have it or can get it.

Just on that, the minister did deem this as a pilot project. It will be monitored. Other communities are obviously interested in it. For example, the community of Carmacks has also talked about this system. So how is the department going to be moni-

toring this system, and when will the pilot project end as a pilot project and perhaps be evaluated so that other communities could put this same system in?

Hon. Mr. Hart: The pilot project, obviously, can't become a pilot until it's operating. We're going to monitor the situation once the facility is operating. We approve the applications based on the submission that's provided. The applicant is responsible for meeting the obligations under that application, as per the agreement that is signed by us and the applicant. It's up to them to ensure that they follow that process.

With respect to the pilot project of the water -- that's exactly what it is. It's a pilot. They're trying to do that. We're working in conjunction with INAC on this particular project because they provided some assistance here in dealing with this project. They also want to see how the project works. So we're working with them on that.

But regarding that, as I stated, when the pilot project is up and actually operating, and when we have some terms and data with which we can do some comparisons, we can make an assessment. But only when the actual project is up and operating can we monitor the situation and do it over a period of time. To ascertain in conjunction -- we will do that in discussion it with INAC.

Mr. Fairclough: Of course. No one expected it to be anything other than that. I hope the pilot project isn't about how we can put funding together with other government agencies -- but exactly how the system will be working, how it works, and whether or not it's efficient and does the job it's intended to do.

Can the minister tell us when he believes that the system will be up and in operation?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We'll be in discussions with the First Nation, and once we have some clarification from them about when the project is complete, we will advance on that process and continue after that to deal with the monitoring of the actual project.

Mr. Fairclough: I just find it hard to believe that the minister and the department don't know the answer -- even an approximate time.

I'll get away from that now, but I definitely have more questions regarding that. I've talked to contractors about this project, and they are concerned.

I did compliment the minister for addressing some of the community issues in the past with respect to general debate on this budget. One that I was particularly pleased to see was improvements to the Na Cho Nyak Dun cemetery access road.

It's obviously a huge improvement. There was just a one-lane dirt road in the past, but the minister knows that that is where the community is expanding right now; there are quite a few houses that have gone up and the subdivisions are there, including the First Nation administration building.

Can the minister tell us what he expects the additional amount to be for completion of this road, and will it be completed next summer?

Hon. Mr. Hart: We completed the existing road as per the members opposite. The additional increase is to deal with -- I assume he's referring to the cemetery access road -- an increase to upgrade the approximately two kilometres, but again,

this is an MRIF project and it will have to go through that process.

Mr. Fairclough: I think the minister would know that answer. Now, there were a number of projects here listed under MRIF that were voted zero dollars and weren't even identified as projects in the spring. Is this a later date for approving these projects through MRIF or are we seeing that some of these projects were able to get done this summer?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, completion of these projects happened after April 1 or we received invoices thereafter, and it's basically bookkeeping to clear out these projects.

Mr. Fairclough: Bookkeeping. That's interesting. Is there anything that this department is doing to improve the quality of life and promote a healthier community in Keno?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Community Services continues to work with the community with regard to their needs. We have provided assistance with regard to their water treatment, water facility and delivery. We have been working with them on issues that they bring forward.

Mr. Fairclough: It would be easier if the department could provide members on this side of the House with community breakdowns. We wouldn't have to be asking these questions about projects that have been identified.

Is the minister still in conflict when it comes to land issues? Is someone else going to be answering this question? I do have questions with regard to land.

Hon. Mr. Hart: With regard to land issues, Minister Lang will have to answer questions at this time. I would ask that the member defer to him. He is here now, so he can take it from here.

Mr. Fairclough: Perhaps the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources could explain the large increase with regard to land development for residential.

Hon. Mr. Lang: It's because the department is working on developing more land out there. The process, of course, needs some lead time because of consultation. The resources put into it will be reclaimed when we sell the lots that will eventually come on the market.

Mr. Fairclough: The minister says "out there". Can he say specifically where we are developing residential lots?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Okay, so to take a look at the supplementary here, the 6.2 increase is due to a revote of 7.62, of which \$641,000 is for Hot Springs Road BST and of course that is an improvement and trail work; 6.6 for the Mount Sima Road subdivision; \$355,000 for the Copper Ridge subdivision for clean-up, deficiencies and repairs, warranty requirements and marketing partially offset by the \$1.6K for the Mount Lorne rural residential project that is on hold pending a local area plan amendment.

Mr. Fairclough: Some of this money was in road improvements to these subdivisions -- chipsealing and so on. I asked the minister responsible whether or not the community of Pelly Crossing could get any monies for road improvement in their community. It is always pushed back to the First Nation as if government has no responsibility in unincorporated communities. But, that is the way it is.

Can the minister outline what residential land development will take place outside the community of Whitehorse, other than the Hot Springs Road or surrounding the other communities? Can he specifically say whether or not there are any residential lots being developed in Keno City?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In answering the member opposite, there are no lots being developed at the moment in Keno City, but we as a government are monitoring the demands and certainly we look forward to eventually looking at Keno City, as the community grows, with prospects of more exploration in that area. There are no expansion plans at the moment, but it is not something that we're not watching and monitoring as we move forward in that area.

Mr. Fairclough: I brought this issue up with the department in the past to see whether or not there was any interest on behalf of the Yukon Party government to develop any lots in Keno. I know it's not a big city -- there are only 14 or 15 people living there -- but if you look at the number of houses that went up, it is probably the fastest growing community in the Yukon.

I did talk to some people there, and there are no lots to expand. There are people actually out of Whitehorse who want to build and live there. I know that there is potential, of course, with mining. I just wanted to bring it back to the minister's attention to look at that small community a little more seriously than the department has done in the past. Could the minister give us his reassurance that he would do that?

I did not hear the minister say what lots are being developed in communities outside of Whitehorse. If the minister doesn't have that information, could he provide it by legislative return?

Hon. Mr. Lang: To address the member opposite about Keno City, we look forward to working with Keno City on the future lot development in that area. We certainly will monitor it and keep abreast of whatever the demands are there in that community.

We are looking at lot development on the periphery of Whitehorse. We are looking at Grizzly Valley, Mount Lorne, Ibex Valley, and we are finishing up the Takhini Hot Springs subdivision. We are getting lots out for rural residential outside the city limits.

Mr. Fairclough: I understand that, and I think we have all been hearing about those developments taking place. Can the minister provide us with any lot development that will be taking place in communities outside of Whitehorse? If he doesn't have that information, could he provide it by legislative return?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Right at the moment there aren't any funds available for addressing the needs in other areas. If we were to look at an area inventory list for outside of Whitehorse, Beaver Creek has a residential surplus of three lots. Carmacks has 17 country residential and four commercial. Carmacks' total is 21. Dawson has 21 residential. Faro has six country residential in Tintina Subdivision and one industrial, so there are seven in reserve in Faro. Haines Junction country residential is seven, residential is six, mobile home is one, and tourist commercial is eight, so that is a total of 22. There are 18 country residential in Mayo and that's the total for them. Ross River

has three industrial lots. In Teslin there are 38 residential airport lots and two commercial lots. In Watson Lake there is a residential inventory of four, 12 mobile home, 13 country residential and 11 industrial. That is a total of 40 lots available in Watson Lake. In Whitehorse there are nine country residential, one commercial in Copper Ridge, and 19 industrial in Mount Sima, which gives an inventory of 29. Of course, this doesn't take into consideration any privately held lots.

The department does monitor what we have out there. We are working with the communities to maximize whatever we do to make sure there is land available for the residents of communities outside of Whitehorse.

Mr. McRobb: I just want to follow up with a quick question on this subject. I didn't hear the minister or the acting minister for land refer to the community of Destruction Bay. They might recall in my budget reply speech that I pointed out that there is a dire need for new lot development in that community. He might recall this because it has been something I've been asking about for the last three years or so.

What is the government doing to satisfy the need for new lot development in Destruction Bay?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We have monitored Destruction Bay and we will continue the monitoring of Destruction Bay and fill the need as it arises. Individuals always have the right to utilize spot applications on land, so we will monitor Destruction Bay, as we monitor all these communities, and work toward expanding access to land for those communities.

Mr. Cardiff: Maybe while we're still on the land issue I'll just ask the minister a couple of questions and then we can go back to the minister who's not responsible for land.

I'd just like to know if the minister could provide me with an update on what is happening with the Mount Lorne plan amendments. There are two processes, in my understanding. There is a plan amendment that's going to go forward and there was another consultation process that was going to happen about amending the plan. If he could just update us on what he knows about where that process is at.

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing the member opposite, the Mount Lorne plan is moving ahead on time and on schedule. We have great cooperation with the community and we're looking forward to having it in front of us very soon.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, the minister needs to, I believe, get a better understanding of what's happening. Two or three minor amendments were going to come forward and then there was going to be a minor plan review. I would just like to know where we're at on the plan amendments that were coming forward before there was an actual review process that took place. I know there was a process for this but, last fall, the plan review process was promised to start last spring and it hasn't. They're wrapped up doing this other amendment with regard to lot extensions to make it more fair for people who have lived there for a long time, so that they're treated the same as people who were treated before, in regard to lot enlargements, so that everybody gets treated the same way.

There were going to be some minor amendments to that, and then the community was ready to move forward with some other minor plan amendments and a process. If the minister

could just let us know -- I don't know if that clarifies what I'm asking the minister and officials.

Hon. Mr. Lang: We are certainly working with the Mount Lorne group on two fronts. We hope to have the capacity on the lot expansion to be working for this coming season -- in other words, after the new year, this spring. In conjunction with that is to hopefully get something out for this coming construction season, and, of course, the bigger one would follow that.

So it's not that we're not doing our work. We're working with the association to prioritize what we do and the steps we take to maximize the urgency of different issues that the organization sees they have. We are going to address those, and then we do have a commitment to move forward on the bigger review too.

So, the first is the process of being able to have lot expansions for Mount Lorne, and the next is your construction season.

Mr. Cardiff: Can the minister tell me if any work has been done within the department with respect to planning for the proposed land development in Mount Lorne?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing that, we're working with the community on that, but it's not a priority at the moment. Certainly the community is open to that dialogue. There are other questions. There is a caribou herd -- an environmental issue there that has to be addressed.

So there are a few bases the department has to cover. We prioritized what we were doing to maximize what we could get out for the community of Mount Lorne in a timely fashion.

So, yes, we are looking at that, but at the moment those two priorities are on the front burner, and we're going to be looking at exactly what the member is addressing here today, but at a later date.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Chair, I just want to ask kind of a general question about land development in general, I guess, and the design of subdivisions. It is something that I raised awhile back now, but it had to do with the design of the Grizzly Valley subdivision. In the original design of the Grizzly Valley subdivision, it was a one-road-in, one-road-out design, and I raised that concern and I believe that it was changed. Can the minister confirm that there are now two roads in and out of the subdivision?

Hon. Mr. Lang: In addressing that, we as the government land managers for the territory are very conscious of the double access to these communities. It is very important for government and for communities to have that kind of access. Grizzly Valley, as it goes forward, will have two accesses to the subdivision.

Mr. Cardiff: So that basically leads me into the next question. Is that now a standard government policy for the design of all subdivisions? It is a public safety issue. We're seeing the same issue here within the City of Whitehorse with Hamilton Boulevard. It is an issue in other areas. Is it a policy in general when it comes to land development to have two accesses to every subdivision?

Hon. Mr. Lang: Certainly, Mr. Chair, we are looking at any lot access being double, understanding that there are

communities out there that have been developed previously and don't have the two accesses. It doesn't mean we're not looking at it, but in a perfect world all these subdivisions would have two accesses to them, and in the future we are committed to making sure that, in fact, it is the policy of this government that these communities will have two accesses.

Mr. Cardiff: I think the minister went even further than what I was asking. Is the minister saying, then, that they are looking at ways of improving existing subdivisions in communities that are now serviced by one access? Are they looking at that with a view to making some improvements in other communities throughout the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Lang: We have resources in the budget to look at a Carcross access situation, a Tagish Estates situation, and the Taku subdivision. So, yes, we are doing exactly what the member has asked.

Mr. Cardiff: I believe I have no further questions in general debate on the land portion of it. I would be willing to go back to the other minister.

I see the Member for Copperbelt would like to ask the minister a question. I would be more than willing to let him go first.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the Member for Mount Lorne for allowing me the time to ask this question. I could have saved it for when we were going through the lines, but I might not have the opportunity then.

Of course, as the minister knows, the Hamilton Boulevard extension has tremendous impact on my riding, as well as on neighbouring ridings. I want to thank the minister again for moving forward with additional funding to carry forward on this project. I do have a couple of questions that I will roll into one on this. First, now that progress is being made, can the minister give us an update on the timetable? Is it still expected to have at least one lift of blacktop on the road by the fall of 2008 and the road open for general use by that time?

Second, those of us who live in that area have certainly learned to live with the Yukon's version of traffic issues, be they minor compared to Outside. Again, I am wondering if the minister can update us on how they are now conceiving of the south intersection of Falcon Road and Hamilton Boulevard where the extension is beginning.

Will it be a T-intersection -- just a three-way T-intersection with stop signs or is there a light anticipated or some form of roundabout? Certainly, in the mornings and evenings, there will be a large amount of traffic trying to turn left and right coming out of the Copper Ridge and Granger areas to access, now, two directions. I am wondering if the minister could explain what is anticipated. That was not yet something that was certain at the public meetings.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for the question with regard to the Hamilton Boulevard extension. I would like to advise the member opposite that we are currently on schedule. Everything is going along as indicated, so I anticipate that the first flat of asphalt will be laid in late 2007 and be fully operational in 2008. Currently, we are on schedule and that is fine.

We are working on that particular issue. We are trying to ease the pressure of the construction with regard to the blasting. We have to blast and make noise, but the blasting is restricted by the airport. They dictate when we can blast and when we can't. Those are the parameters under which they do the blasting. We can't interfere with the flights, because we are close to the airport.

With regard to Falcon Drive, we don't anticipate any change to Falcon Drive. With regard to the extension, again, this is a City of Whitehorse project. We are looking at adding on to the extension and carrying it on to Robert Service Way.

Mr. Mitchell: I thank the minister and I will compliment him, because when he reads the Blues, he'll discover that he was prescient in that he answered the other question I was about to ask, but had not yet asked. I was looking in the local paper at the advertisement warning of the blasting, and I hadn't yet asked the question, so I'm quite impressed. That's a good skill; probably it comes from his hockey days, anticipating where the puck will be, rather than where it has been. Nevertheless, I'll just ask one follow-up question on the blasting. I am somewhat concerned. Obviously the blasting has to be done, but I have noticed that despite these relatively small warnings in the local papers, I continue to see local residents walking their dogs and taking all-terrain vehicles and even mountain bikes down through that area from time to time. I just was wondering if there is going to be a further amount of posting, warning, rope barriers, more advertising -- perhaps some public service announcements on the radio -- because I do think this could become a public safety issue, since we're not really certain what time the blasting will be.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for that question. I also like his analogy. Every once in awhile, though, I used to get sunburned from the light going on.

The issue with regard to the blasting -- I would like to emphasize that we run community events on the radio. We announce on the radio when they're taking place. We have got signs up. The member opposite probably saw it in the paper the other day. We don't want people in there with regard to that. We have expressed to the contractor that it's important to get as much notice as possible out there, but he also says it's a fairly large area and it's fairly difficult for them to secure the area completely. Some people will go in that area regardless of the task.

We still have a large amount of rock to get out of there -- adjacent to the rock gardens. Again, as I stated, we have to work with the airport in dealing with aviation requirements. We are running advertisements in both newspapers, daily on CKRW, community announcements on the radio stations, public service announcements. We're doing everything we can. Before each blast, the contractor calls the Whitehorse tower to get permission and a time window during which they can blast. The contractor now calls the RCMP and 9-1-1 dispatch prior to blasting so that they can better deal with the public when people hear the big noise go off.

If you remember the first day or two, people were asking, "Did you hear the jet come by?" It wasn't a jet. But we are working and we are getting it out of the way and doing as much

as we can. I know that when my neighbour came and asked me if I had seen the jet come by, I said no, and he said, "Well, did you hear it?" and I said, "No. That is blasting."

The contractor is required by law to blast as many holes as he can load in one day. As such, his typical operation is to load holes in the morning and then blast in the afternoon or just before sunset. Prior to and during the blast, the contractor has guards posted at all the access points in the area, including the trails and the roads that bisect those trails. A warning horn is sounded two minutes prior to the blast and, again, it is also sounded to be all clear when it is finished. The contractor seems to be taking all the precautions within his power to secure the area and make it reasonably safe for those in and around that area.

Mr. Cardiff: I would like to go back to something the minister talked about a little earlier -- community infrastructure. There was a discussion going on about recreation centres. Community Services is responsible for building new community infrastructure, and it has access to various funding programs -- MRIF, CSIF and others -- and they disburse money for some of these projects.

They are very important parts of our community. They are community centres, fire halls, recreation centres and hockey rinks. I believe in this supplementary budget there is money for an elder activity centre as well. When it comes to these buildings, I really think that the government has to start to lead by example. One of the things you constantly hear, and we've heard over and over again, is that this infrastructure gets built and the cost of operating and maintaining it is sometimes a burden, I guess, to the communities. So, whatever we can do to lessen that burden I think would be good.

What the minister said a little earlier was that these buildings were being built to higher standards of energy efficiency. As someone who has worked in the construction industry for 25 or 30 years, I understand that and I understand how buildings are put together and the concept of building energy-efficient buildings.

What I'd like to know, though, is why good ideas that come from communities around green energy -- in Whitehorse, we see that the City of Whitehorse is possibly looking at distribution systems using geothermal energy. There have been other proposals.

It's my understanding -- talking to constituents, not necessarily constituents from Mount Lorne, but constituents from other areas -- and from my experience in the heating industry, there is geothermal energy, and you can use heat pumps to reduce the amount of energy needed to heat a building.

Now, the minister said that the Marsh Lake community centre was built to high energy efficiency standards, but there were also people in that community who wanted to use -- it could have been either geothermal energy or a warm spring. In the long run, it could have saved the community and the taxpayer a lot of money in operating and maintenance costs.

I understand, having worked in the industry, that there is a higher up front capital cost to it. But, you know, it's just like investing money -- it's like investing in a community. You're making that investment up front to lessen the burden on the

taxpayer, the community and the operation and maintenance of those facilities.

Now, at the same time, we know that the government is working on a climate change strategy. Part of a climate change strategy is about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. So when you build an energy-efficient building, and you still put fossil fuel-based heating systems in them, you may be reducing the carbon footprint, but you can go even further by using other technologies -- new, more modern technologies -- to be the primary source of heat for that building.

They can still have a backup source of heat if needed. Not only does it save the community and the taxpayer money in operation and maintenance, it also would probably meet the goals of the government's soon-to-be climate change strategy. I would like the minister to make some comments about why they don't seem to be willing to do that and whether or not he would consider implementing a policy in the department to look at greener technologies when it comes to buildings that his department oversees.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for his question. With regard to energy efficiency in our buildings, as I indicated, we are ultimately aware of the costs, because in many cases, we bear the cost of most of them. Obviously, it is to our benefit to ensure that the best and most effective way of heating the facility is considered.

In the case of Marsh Lake, for example, we did look at the geothermal aspect of heating the facility. Our technical experts indicated that it was just not cost-efficient at the time, based on the information and equipment that we have for geothermal heating. That was the case in that particular instance. We asked them to look at it. That is the recommendation that came to us on that particular building.

We always look at O&M costs, whether for a municipality or unincorporated areas. It doesn't matter where it is. The building is an important aspect, and the design of the building is important. How it will be heated, what kind of fuel will be used -- all those things are taken into consideration.

We have several programs that are available through the Energy Solutions Centre, Yukon Housing Corporation, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and other government agencies to provide guidelines on energy efficiency and all that. In essence, Yukon Housing Corporation does have a full range of programs for exactly the reasons outlined by the member opposite. The Energy Solutions Centre has been working with commercial properties on dealing with alternate sources.

I know, for example, there are several commercial facilities in Whitehorse that are using heat pumps right now. We look at those solutions and we consider all of them. For example, we are even considering in Mayo the warm springs there. Again, we were advised that that just wasn't a feasible process for efficiency, given what we had.

In the construction, their design was structured such that it had a really high efficiency rating and that's what was put into that facility. It is structured such that they can cut off areas of their recreation centre when it's not in use.

I can assure the member opposite that when we are looking at facilities, especially in unincorporated areas -- as I previ-

ously mentioned, in unincorporated communities we are the ones paying the bill, so it is to our benefit to make sure that it is efficient.

But when we are working with our municipalities, we are also using the operation and maintenance as the major factor. We continue to look at those costs. Thus, in many cases, this is why we are looking at structures that are, shall we say, a little rectangular or square in nature so that they are a little easier to heat and maintain.

Mr. Cardiff: I'd like to ask the minister: does his department, the Department of Community Services, have any policies promoting green technology?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for the question. We have a government-wide policy with regard to that. It's part of our climate change strategy.

Mr. Cardiff: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I couldn't hear the minister's response to that question.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for the question and we have a government-wide policy with regard to this, and that's part of our climate change strategy.

Mr. Cardiff: I appreciate the minister's answer. Could the minister provide a copy of that in the next couple of days for the members on this side of the Legislature?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Cardiff: For next week?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Well, the Department of Environment generally handles that through there with the department objective. This is also handled through Highways and Public Works through the Property Management Agency, which uses that policy with regard to the building of all our buildings throughout the Yukon. That is the process. Many of those objectives were outlined in Premier Fentie's address on the Department of Environment on page 7-2.

Mr. Cardiff: The minister has stated that there's a government-wide policy and it's not common for the full policy to be put in the budget book. There has to be a policy in a policy book somewhere that promotes green technology. That was what the question was, and all we're asking is for somebody on that side of the House -- somebody in the offices upstairs -- to pull that piece of paper out of the policy binder and they can put it in the internal mail and it'll be in our office on Monday morning.

So it'll probably be there tomorrow afternoon. So if that can happen, that is all we're asking for.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I'd like to just read a quick quote and deal with this: "To ensure that the natural resources and the environment of the Yukon are managed and used in accordance with government policy by maintaining and enhancing the quality of the Yukon's environment for present and future generations through ecosystem-based management, conservation of resources and protection and maintenance of biodiversity; ..."

Mr. Cardiff: That is the specific policy that promotes green technology? There is no mention of technology in that statement, Mr. Chair. If the minister wants, I can continue reading the rest of the statement as well. Quite frankly, I don't see a

reference anywhere in the statements on page 7-2 -- which is in another department -- to technology.

We'll move on to something else because obviously there is no policy in this government that promotes the use of green technology in buildings. We know that there is one -- I believe -- in the Fleet Vehicle Agency because there are some hybrid vehicles in the government's vehicle fleet. But, there is nothing on page 7-2.

I'd like to maybe change it up a little bit here and go back to one of the minister's favourite topics. I'd like to know if there has been any progress on working with the City of Whitehorse on the domestic well program. Has there been any progress at all?

I know that the Member for Lake Laberge has constituents in his area who were interested in accessing the domestic well program, but there was a problem because of the way that it was written -- that the taxation authorities and the taxation authority within the City of Whitehorse is the City of Whitehorse -- but there was some work being done. I have constituents who are so frustrated by the fact that they couldn't access this program, that it is not transferable into the City of Whitehorse, that they went out and borrowed the money from a bank -- at the going rate -- to have a well drilled because they couldn't wait for the government to get it together to work with the city.

Hon. Mr. Hart: The member opposite knows full well what my response is. We have done everything this government can do to assist the City of Whitehorse in accessing this particular program. They have had the opportunity to provide it. I will, though, just to try and ease the member opposite's mind somewhat, say that we are working with the Association of Yukon Communities to possibly make changes to the *Municipal Act*. One of those possible changes to the act that we are going to consult about next spring is dealing with the same specific piece of the legislation that the City of Whitehorse has difficulty with. If that is passed, the City of Whitehorse will be in a position to handle the water well program. That is one of their specific requests.

Mr. Cardiff: That is good news. If that's what happens, so be it, but we all know how long it takes this government to develop new legislation and do consultations. We have seen that over the years. I guess it depends on where it is on their priority list.

With regard to changes in the *Municipal Act*, we know that the Association of Yukon Communities and municipalities have been asking for a review of this act. There have been some minor changes over the years, but I believe that there is a lot more work that needs to be done and is desired by municipalities. We won't delve into that too much.

In the budget there is a minor increase in the domestic well program. Can the minister explain why? Is it because there is a large interest and uptake of that program? Is the program being evaluated? If so, is it working well?

Hon. Mr. Hart: During my preamble, I discussed this particular issue. The well program is basically \$104,000 for revotes that were started but have not yet been completed. This is partially offset by a decrease in the transfer from rural electrification. In essence, the rural program is working very well.

Our officials are well versed in the program now. The uptake is very good and we are very happy with the results to date. We are monitoring, basically, what it is costing on average. To advise the member opposite, it is roughly somewhere between \$20,000 and \$21,000 on average per well. So far -- cross my fingers -- as far as I know, we haven't hit a dry well.

In essence, it's very well-received, much the same as the rural electrification program. We are monitoring the costs based on what's there, as I said. We will evaluate and, when the program becomes oversubscribed, we will have to sit down and have a look at what those costs are and how we can adjust them.

Mr. Cardiff: I would like to go to another topic that was discussed a little bit earlier in the Legislature when we were talking about the comprehensive municipal grant. I asked the minister a question about LAC funding. We kind of got our wires crossed maybe a little bit.

Basically, there is the comprehensive municipal grant. We passed the piece of legislation where it is going to go up a specified amount for each of the next five years. The grants are basically tied to some sort of escalator clause.

When I asked the minister a question about local area council funding, he basically ended up telling us that for all local area councils and hamlet councils, the playing field was levelled. Everybody rose to the top of the heap, and they're all getting the same grant every year.

But the original question I asked in my opening remarks about that was: will local area council funding -- the annual grant to local area councils now that it's a level playing field for all local area councils -- also be tied to an escalator clause?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Maybe what I will try to do is reiterate the comprehensive municipal grant. The comprehensive municipal grant is an increase that's going to be consistent over the next five years -- a specific amount, every year, for the next five years.

The amount of that increase was based on the consumer price index. Basically, we prorated the CPI between now and 2011 to give us that amount. That is how the amount is done. Local area council funding is not included in the comprehensive fuel grant. It never has been. LAC funding is something that is developed by us, and it is funding that we provide the LACs to assist us in making recommendations to the government.

This summer, I arranged a meeting of all the LACs, along with AYC, to come up with some ideas on how they can improve their facilities, what they're responsible for, discuss their mandate and come back to us. The result of that is that we made a change to the LAC funding that provided them an equal balance of funding. As the member knows, some LACs were receiving substantially less than others.

Their request was that they would all receive the same amount of funding and we met that request. We also basically ironed out what their funding could be utilized for and how it could be administered. Under the base grant, funding was also made available to unincorporated communities, so there is some additional funding being incorporated on an annual basis -- same as a comprehensive grant but, of course, on a much

smaller basis for the unincorporated communities. Their amount is increased per annum to deal with unincorporated communities. Those are the unincorporated towns throughout the whole Yukon. Also, I recently announced a further amount to deal with capital costs -- immediate capital cost needs -- for these unincorporated communities.

Mr. Cardiff: The question was for clarity. Will local area council funding be tied to any kind of an escalator clause?

Hon. Mr. Hart: No.

Mr. Cardiff: That was easier. At least I'll be able to let the local area councils know that answer, and I know that some of them will be disappointed that they're not being treated the same as others in the Yukon. Municipalities get their funding tied to an escalator clause but local area councils don't. Their costs go up as well, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to ask the minister a little bit about the transfer of emergency medical services to the area of protective services in Community Services?

There is also some work being done. Some consultants have been engaged to provide advice, according to the press release, on how to best modernize and coordinate emergency response services. I am just wondering what exactly is included in that. Is it just emergency medical services or other services that are provided in communities as well? The press release was basically about emergency medical services and the transfer, and the fact that they are going to hire consultants to study it and make recommendations about modernizing and coordinating services. Exactly what services are covered under this study?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I thank the member opposite for that question. We are looking at all our primary response services: EMS, EMO, Search and Rescue, wildland fire and volunteer fire departments. They are all going to be utilizing the same dispatch service. We are also researching the utilization of 9-1-1 throughout the Yukon. Right now, that's not quite possible throughout the Yukon, but we are researching that aspect. We are looking at all our response processes.

We are amassing a team right now to go out and consult with all our people in all of those divisions. We will get some feedback and prepare an organization chart -- hopefully by the end of December -- showing what it will look like. That way, early in the new year and prior to the fire season starting, we will be up and ready to go and have the necessary people in place.

We will also be looking at our equipment and our facilities in all these areas to ascertain what is required, what is needed right now, and what has to be done in the next few years, for example. With regard to that, we are also looking at the hiring of primary care paramedics for the communities of Dawson and Watson Lake -- underway as we speak. That particular process is underway.

We anticipate that the transfer of EMS will take place sometime in December. As I said earlier, the response that we have from EMS people right now has been very good. We anticipate that we are up for the challenge in Community Services and we look forward to putting this new service into place, hopefully modernizing and providing a service to the Yukon,

and relieving the pressure on our volunteers as much as possible and dealing with it.

We are looking at all the services we require right now, as I said, right across the board, including EMS. So we will be out there. We have targeted meetings with individuals in our communities and we will be starting that in the next couple weeks.

Mr. Cardiff: Just so I understand this, it was Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Measures Organization, Search and Rescue, wildland fire and volunteer fire departments are what the minister mentioned.

Part of the issue, I guess, where the Minister of Health and Social Services got into some trouble was with the treatment of volunteer ambulance attendants.

Do you know if that issue -- I understand that the ambulance attendants in Dawson have picked up their radios and gone back to work. Has that issue been resolved?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In answer to the Member for Mount Lorne, I would refer him back to the press release announcing the change in October, noting of course -- again, I draw the member's attention to it -- that it clearly outlines the structure that will occur.

The Department of Health and Social Services, through the fine work of officials, is communicating with the volunteers and working with them. The volunteers are considering the proposal. I have to again emphasize to members that, despite attempts by some -- not to point fingers across the aisle -- to reflect on the events of this summer, in July, when we first had the issue with volunteer ambulance attendants choosing to turn in their radios and to cease to provide service, I very clearly indicated to the media at that time that the government intended to respond with a proposal of how we would foresee supporting the volunteers going forward through a structure of an agreement and that we would get back to them with that proposal in early fall. That is exactly when we provided that proposal and, as indicated, the response to date has been generally positive from most of the EMS crews.

The volunteers in Watson Lake have not come back, but a number of the volunteers in the City of Dawson have resumed service. I welcome them back, and I appreciate the service that they provide.

The Member for Mount Lorne knows full well that on every occasion that I have discussed this issue with the media since this occurred in the summer I have taken the opportunity to express the government's appreciation and my appreciation for the work of the volunteer ambulance attendants as well as for volunteers in other areas of emergency response -- to recognize and thank them for their contribution of their time.

I recognize the pressure that providing volunteer service puts on other areas of their lives -- noting that the government remains committed to working, through a negotiated process, on an agreement to support rural volunteer ambulance attendants. Another part of modernizing emergency response once that agreement is concluded by officials in my department in the month of December is the scheduling of the transfer of the EMS responsibilities to the Department of Community Services, thus enabling all areas of emergency response to be centralized under one branch and one roof and enabling officials

and the minister in that area to have a more dedicated focus on the emergency response issues -- including working with and supporting the volunteers.

For the member to imply that in any way officials from Health and Social Services have not handled this matter appropriately or respectfully -- or to suggest that I have not been respectful of volunteers -- is contrary to the facts. He ought to be aware of that and I would encourage him to reflect that improvement in his further remarks in this area. Again, I hope that has provided clarity to the member opposite.

The officials of my department responded very quickly, when there was a gap in service, to provide service in the City of Dawson and the Town of Watson Lake. It was very rapid and with very little notice. They fulfilled that obligation on behalf of government to ensure emergency response and ambulance service in those areas and ensure that it remained available to people there, and we continued along the timelines and in line with our commitments, as outlined in July, to provide a proposal to the volunteers. Right now we are waiting on their work and review. Any discussion that takes place in that setting will, of course, occur through the negotiating team. That is basically the overview of that situation.

Seeing the time, Mr. Chair, I move that you report progress.

Chair: Mr. Cathers has moved that we report progress.
Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: Mr. Cathers has moved that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.
Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 8, *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You've heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.
Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

The following Sessional Paper was tabled November 15, 2007:

07-1-42

Motor Transport Board 2006/2007 Annual Report (Lang)

The following document was filed November 15, 2007

07-1-33

Investment Portfolio Report as at November 15, 2007 for Government of Yukon (Taylor)